

*The
Book of Mormon
as an
Ancient Israelite Temple*

*Nineteen Classic Temple Characteristics
of the
Book of Mormon*

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Ancient Israelite Temple***

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of the
Book of Mormon***

by

LeGrand L. Baker

Eborn Publishing

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Dedicated to the memory
of
David S. King

Dearly Beloved Friend

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1 John M. Lundquist, "The Common Temple Ideology of the Ancient Near East," *The Temple in Antiquity*, ed. Truman G. Madison (Provo, Utah, Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1984), 53-76. He expanded the article in a second publication: "What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 83-117.

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Introduction

This present study does not discuss that second institution of the Book of Mormon temple. Rather, it simply acknowledges that it is there and refers the reader to Stephen D. Ricks and my book, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?* where it is talked roundabout, but never explicitly described. In this present study we will examine the Book of Mormon in terms of the first functions of an ancient temple—the ones anyone could observe, and write or talk about. The purpose, here, is to show that the authors of the Book of Mormon had a full understanding of the ancient temple drama and used it as the structural outline of their sermons and writings.

Part I

The Book of Mormon

as an

Ancient Israelite Temple

It has become increasingly evident that the entire Book of Mormon is an ancient Israelite temple text.² The Book of Mormon may be the most comprehensive and authoritative commentary on the ancient Israelite temple drama that has ever been written. It is certainly the most comprehensive and authoritative discussion of that drama that we now have access to.

The Book of Mormon is a wonderful testimony of the Savior. Woven among its histories and biographies is a profound intimacy that resonates with each of us. The stories never let us lose sight of the overriding fact that the Book of Mormon really is only about ourselves and about our relationship with the Savior.

In many ways, there are two books written on the same pages of the Book of Mormon. The first is an invitation to “come unto Christ.” The surface text of the Book of Mormon may be the most marvelous book ever written. It is about us and the Savior. Its truthfulness is testified by the Holy Ghost and there are millions of people who know by that Spirit that its words are truth.

The second is a subtext, written with the same words, but in a different language. It is written in the language of the ancient Israelite temple drama. That story is about One’s Self and about our relationship with the Savior *in the Nephite temple*.

In comparing the Book of Mormon to the ancient Israelite temples, I have carefully avoided pulling back the curtain to reveal the ancient temple in the Book of Mormon subtext. Instead, what I have sought to do, is to point out that there really is a curtain that

²LeGrand L. Baker and Stephen D. Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord? The Psalms in Israel’s Temple Worship in the Old Testament and in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City, Eborn Books, 2009). The book was reprinted in 2011 and following footnotes references are to the page numbers in that 2011 second (paperback) edition.

may be pulled back, and that behind that veil we may discover a new dimension of sacred space.

This is not an attempt to reconstruct the ancient Nephite temple drama. Stephen Ricks and I have already done that in *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord? The Psalms in Israel's Temple Worship In the Old Testament and In the Book of Mormon* (Eborn Books, Salt Lake City, 2009, 2011). In that book we have shown that the Psalms were the text of the ancient Israelite temple rites, and we have tried to put many of the psalms back in their original order, so we can see the format of the sacred drama as it was performed at the time of Solomon's Temple. Having done that, we showed that every major sermon in the Book of Mormon was based on the Nephite temple experience. We did that carefully and with much reverence, because those are the things "hidden from the foundation of the world." They have always been hidden; they always will be hidden. They must be known—but they cannot be taught except by the Holy Ghost. They are imbedded in the subtexts of all the scriptures, like diamonds in the mountain, only to be unearthed by those who recognize the value of what they find.

For example, we may ask, "Why are there no evidences of Christian temple services in the New Testament?" The answer is that it is found throughout the text. The Greek word *mysterion* is translated "mystery" in the New Testament. It means "secrets imposed through initiation into sacred rites." Almost every time that word is used by the Savior or by one of the apostles, it is a reference to the "sacred rites" in a Christian temple.³ A striking

³Vassilios Tzaferis, "'To God and Jesus Christ,' Early Christian Prayer Hall Found in Megiddo Prison," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, March/April, 2007 vol 33, no 2, 33-49.

There is a fascinating photo on page 49. Tzaferis describes it this way:

DOMUS IN QUA CHRISTIANI CONVENIEBANT, or "houses in which Christians gather," also called *domus eccesiae*, came into use in the second century A.D., when the Christian community did not yet have permanent churches dedicated to worship. A "house church" functionally similar to the prayer hall at Megiddo was found in the 1930s in Dura Europos in Syria. Although not originally meant to be a religious structure, the simple two-story dwelling was converted

example is 2 Peter 1:1-4 where he uses the word faith (*pistis*⁴) and then in those four verses describes the purpose of the entire Christian temple service. Thus, Nephi can introduce himself by saying that he has “a great knowledge of the goodness and mysteries of God” (1 Nephi 1:1).

Similarly, ancient Israelite temples housed two separate institutions—both acting under priesthood authority and functioning together as a single unit. First, they were the source of the ancient state’s economic and political stability. The story told in their ceremonies and rituals were the cultural underpinnings that gave legitimacy to the king and held the community together. Those functions of the Israelite temple can be shown historically, and are widely discussed. Hugh Nibley and his colleagues at FARMS have written extensively about them.

The second institution was altogether different from that. It taught the symbolic and very real *way*—that one might *walk* the *path* that leads to the summit of *the sacred mountain* where we may be in the presence of God. The underlying power of the ancient Israelite temples lay in this second institution. At the core of these teachings were the “mysteries of the kingdom.” They are not readily discussed and no scriptural author candidly describes them. It is a secret that only the initiated can know—and they must learn it through the study of the drama and the scriptures, and through the spirit of revelation. We cannot know the ancient temple drama if we do not know the scriptures, but we cannot know the

into a house of worship with a place for the Eucharist table, a vestry for clergy clothes, and a baptistery. The walls of the baptistery were decorated with frescoes illustrating scenes from the Bible such as Adam and Eve, the Good Shepherd and a parade of women that might depict the women at the tomb of Jesus.

His explanation is reasonable. However, looking at the photo suggests something different. What he calls a Eucharist table could be an altar, the vestry could be a small room that was once behind a veil, the baptistery is a font, in addition to the frescoes of Adam and Eve, and the women, the ceiling has painted stars. If this is what it appears to be, then it is also evidence that there were small temples, probably in many cities where there were Christians.

4For a discussion of faith as *pistis* see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 697-710.

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heart of the scriptures if we do not know the Israelite temple drama.

This present study does not discuss that second institution of the Book of Mormon temple. Rather, it simply acknowledges that it is there and refers the reader to our book, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?* where it is talked roundabout, but never explicitly described. In this present study we will examine the Book of Mormon in terms of the first functions of an ancient temple—the ones anyone could observe, and write or talk about. The purpose, here, is to show that the authors of the Book of Mormon had a full understanding of the ancient temple drama and used it as the structural outline of their sermons and writings.

There are ancient Israelite precedents for writing a book to follow the blueprint of their temple and its services. The Book of Job⁵ may be the best example in the Old Testament. The book of Leviticus may be another.⁶

When the Prophet Mormon compiled the Book of Mormon, he had at his disposal a thousand years of history and documents from which to glean the sermons and the stories he wished to use to paint a very big picture. It is a history, but it is also, like the Book of Job, a macrocosm of the Israelite temple drama and rites that sustained the Nephite culture during those thousand years. In writing his history that way, Mormon created a story that shows all the functional characteristics of an ancient temple. When we compare the patterns of the Book of Mormon to the public and easily recognized functions of ancient Israelite temples, we find that they each fit together remarkably well. Because those public

⁵For a discussion of the Book of Job see *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 116-18.

⁶ Mary Douglas, *Jacob's Tears, The Priestly Work of Reconciliation* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004). Douglas's theses is that the book of Leviticus was written as a microcosm of Moses's Tabernacle and its ordinances, which, in turn were a microcosm of Mount Sinai and Moses's enthronement there.

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temple functions have been discussed at great length by both LDS and non-LDS scholars, this present book relies heavily on their work.

In 1984, one of Hugh Nibley's students, John M. Lundquist, wrote a paper in which he synthesized all that scholars had written about the nature and purposes of ancient temples.⁷ Lundquist unified their findings into nineteen generalizations about what constituted a temple in the ancient Near East. He did not claim that all ancient temples had all of these characteristics, but he did claim that a structure that did not have at least the most important of these characteristics may be a beautiful building, but was not actually a temple.

The purpose of this present study is to show that the Book of Mormon is like an ancient Israelite temple in that it meets most of the criteria established by Lundquist when he cataloged the meaning and functions of an ancient temple. The greatest difference between the ancient temples he describes and the Book of Mormon is that he discusses buildings—three dimensional structures we can walk about inside. The Book of Mormon is not a building. Rather, it is a portable temple we can carry but cannot enter. It can be examined only as it is discovered between the covers of the sacred text.

The 19 typological characteristics that Lundquist identified as quintessential of ancient temples are:

1. The temple is the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain.
2. The cosmic mountain represents the primordial hillock,

⁷John M. Lundquist, "The Common Temple Ideology of the Ancient Near East," *The Temple in Antiquity*, ed. Truman G. Madison (Provo, Utah, Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1984), 53-76.

Lundquist has since written a number of books and articles about the temples of various cultures, and is widely recognized as an expert on the meaning of the world's temples and of sacred space.

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the place which first emerged from the waters that covered the earth during the creative process. In Egypt, for example, all temples are seen as representing the primordial hillock.

3. The temple is often associated with the waters of life which flow from a spring within the building itself—or rather the temple is viewed as incorporating within itself such a spring or as having been built upon the spring....and of the life-giving, saving nature of the waters of life.

4. The temple is associated with the tree of life.

5. The temple is built on separate, sacral, set apart space.

6. The temple is oriented toward the four world regions or cardinal directions, and to various celestial bodies such as the polar star. As such, it is, or can be, an astronomical observatory, the main purpose of which is to assist the temple priests in regulating the ritual calendar.

7. Temples, in their architectonic orientation, express the idea of a successive ascension toward heaven. The Mesopotamian ziggurat or staged temple tower is the best example of this architectural principle. It was constructed of three, five, or seven levels or stages. Monumental staircases led to the upper levels, where smaller temples stood. The basic ritual pattern represented in these structures is that the worshippers ascended the staircase to the top, the deity descended from heaven, and the two met in the small temple which stood at the top of the structure.

8. The plan and measurements of the temple are revealed to the king or prophet, and the plan must be carefully carried out....

9. The temple is the central, organizing, unifying institution in the ancient Near Eastern society. The temple is associated with abundance and prosperity, indeed is perceived as the giver of these.

10. Inside the temple images of deities as well as living kings, temple priests and worshippers are washed, anointed,

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clothed, fed, enthroned and symbolically initiated into the presence of deity, and thus into eternal life. Further, New Year rites held in the temple include the reading and dramatic portrayals of texts which recite a pre-earthly war in heaven; a victory in that war by the forces of good, led by a chief deity; and the creation and establishment of the cosmos, cities, temples, and the social order. The sacred marriage is carried out at this time.

11. The temple is associated with the realm of the dead, the underworld, the afterlife, the grave....The temple is the link between this world and the next.

12. Sacral, communal meals are carried out in connection with temple ritual, often at the conclusion of or during a covenant ceremony.

13. The tablets of destiny are consulted both in the cosmic sense by the gods, and yearly in a special temple chamber.... It was by this means that the will of deity was communicated to the people through the king or prophet for a given year.

14. God's word is revealed in the temple, usually in the holy of holies, to priests or prophets attached to the temple or to the religious system that it represents.

15. There is a close interrelationship between the temple and law in the ancient Near East. The building or restoration of a temple is perceived as the moving force behind a restating or "codifying" of basic legal principles, and of the "righting" and organizing of proper social order. The building or refurbishing of temples is central to the covenant process.

16. The temple is a place of sacrifice.

17. The temple and its ritual are enshrouded in secrecy. This secrecy relates to the sacredness of the temple precinct and the strict division in ancient times between sacred and profane space.

18. The temple and its cult are central to the economic

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structure of ancient Near Eastern society.

19. The temple plays a legitimizing political role in the ancient Near East.⁸

Even though Lundquist's typology assumes an ancient temple is a three dimensional object, like a building or a mountain, the words of the Book of Mormon come remarkably close to meeting almost all of the criteria Lundquist mentions. This is because most of what constituted an ancient temple has to do with how people understood their temple's functions and teachings, rather than just what they actually do there. It is that understanding that gives their actions meaning.

As we study Book of Mormon's temple text, we discover how very important it is. Through it, we perceive that the concept — even the function—of the ancient Israelite temples also must have had a dual reality. A “temple” was a three-dimensional object that we can see and feel, and in which we can move about to observe and participate in its rites and dramas. But the ancient temple drama was also a complex, intangible reality in which our mind could move about and participate in a dimension unrestricted by walls and a roof, or our concept of time and space. This second reality is epitomized in the temple of the Book of Mormon.⁹

A three dimensional structure can facilitate what people do in their temples, but it can only symbolically represent what happens within their hearts and minds. In contrast, the Book of Mormon can only symbolically represent what is done in a three-dimensional temple, but it can lead people to the actualization of the principles they learn while in a three dimensional temple. For example, a manmade temple is only symbolically associated with the tree of life, but the Book of Mormon can teach us how to come

⁸Lundquist, “The Common Temple Ideology,” 53-76.

⁹For other examples of the significance of sacred books see Geo Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1950).

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to the real tree and partake of its real fruit.

In short, those parts of Lundquist's typology that presuppose walls and a roof are met by the Book of Mormon only in discussion, the structure of its ideas, and symbolism; but the parts of the typology that require no movement within a physical edifice are met by the Book of Mormon with a literalness that a manmade building can only represent symbolically.

The precision with which the Book of Mormon fits the criteria of an ancient temple is much too close to be coincidental. Mormon's overall outline—the sequence of events and sermons that he incorporated into the book—show that he had a thorough knowledge of all facets of ancient Israelite temple worship. The result of his work is a definitive commentary on the functions, purposes, and teachings of the ancient Israelite temple and its services. Indeed, his commentary is so precisely matched to the legitimate purpose, workings and theoretical structure of the ancient Israelite temple drama that the Book of Mormon is virtually an ancient Israelite temple in its own right.¹⁰

¹⁰For discussions of temples with which to compare similarities in the Book of Mormon see: Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord*; Catherine M. Thomas, "The Brother of Jared at the Veil," *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 388-98; Thomas R. Valletta, "Conflicting Orders: Alma and Amulek in Ammonihah," *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), 183-231; John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple & Sermon on the Mount* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), 369-375.

For discussions on the meaning of the temple see: Beverly Campbell, "Mother Eve, Mentor for Today's Woman: A Heritage of Honor," *The Journal of Collegium Aesculapium* (Spring 1994): 37-49; also her *Eve and the Choice Made in Eden* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 2003) and *Eve and the Mortal Journey* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005); Richard O. Cowan, "Sacred Temples Ancient and Modern," *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, 99-120; David S. King, *Come to the House of the Lord* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 2000); David S. King,

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Mormon designed the Book of Mormon so its temple could be portable but not too readily accessible. The temple of the Book of Mormon can only be identified and understood within the conceptual context of a three dimensional temple. The Book of Mormon does not admit its casual readers to its inner temple. Neither is it penetrated by an in-depth, but entirely academic study of the book. Similarly, neither will a casual nor a wholly academic encounter with a three dimensional temple give one access to the depths of its meaning.

The storyline taught in the ancient Israelite temple drama, like the one in the Book of Mormon, is in the same pattern as the cosmic myth.

The cosmic myth is a story that permits us to see the pattern of the ancient temple drama without revealing too much of what else might be seen there. It is a story that tells truth in sacred time. Whether the details of the cosmic myth do or do not represent historical fact has no bearing on whether the story conveys principles of eternal truth. The pattern of the classic cosmic myth is familiar to each of us. It is the most popular theme of our literature. It is the storyline of *Hamlet*, *Star Wars*, *Tom Jones*, and *The Hymn of the Pearl*, and is found frequently in the scriptures. The book of Job is one of the most beautiful examples. The reason these stories have a universal appeal is because we all share the innate sense

Come to the House of the Lord (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 2000); Hugh Nibley, "Evangelium Quadraginta Dierum: The Forty-day Mission of Christ—The Forgotten Heritage," *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 10-44; Nibley, "A House of Glory," *Temples of the Ancient World*, 29-47; Nibley, "The Meaning of the Temple," *Temple and Cosmos*, 1-41; Nibley, "On the Sacred and the Symbolic," 535-621; Nibley, "What Is a Temple?" Nibley, *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, ed. Todd M. Compton and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987), 355-90; Nibley, "Return to the Temple," Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, ed. Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 49-54.

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that somehow they are a reflection of our own eternal autobiography. The cosmic myth is always in the pattern of a chiasmus.¹¹ It looks like this:

- A. The hero is required to leave home.
- B. He is given a seemingly impossible task.
- C. He confronts overwhelming odds and certain failure
- B. He succeeds in accomplishing the task.
- A. He returns home, triumphant.

A way of writing that so it will be more meaningful to Latter-day Saints, is this:

- A. The hero is required to leave his premortal home .
- B. Before leaving, he is given a difficult task.
- C. On earth he confronts daunting odds.
- B. Notwithstanding the difficulties, he succeeds.
- A. He returns triumphant to his celestial home.¹²

It is the story of our own eternal progression, of the plan of salvation, the pattern of the Savior's eternal biography, and the drama performed in the ancient Israelite temples.

Consistent with his word, and as further evidence that his intent was to preserve an understanding of the Israelite temple, Nephi patterned the entire book of First Nephi after the cosmic myth, that is, after the same chiastic pattern as the Israelite temple drama:

- A. Nephi and his family must leave home.
- B. They are given a seeming impossible task.
- C. They receive all necessary empowerment.
- D. Rebellion and starvation in the wilderness.

¹¹See John W. Welch, ed. *Chiasmus in Antiquity* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1981).

¹²Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord*, 80.

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- C. The Liahona leads to a mountain top and food.
- B. They travel to Bountiful to complete their task.
- A. They arrive at the promised land.¹³

The ancient Israelite temple in the Book of Mormon is veiled but it is not ambiguous. An in-depth study of the Book of Mormon within the spiritual/academic context of an ancient three dimensional temple will open the Book of Mormon temple to the full view of its reader, just as a spiritual/academic study of the three dimensional temple drama within the context of the Book of Mormon will give the activities within the Israelite three dimensional temple meanings that can open our mind to a new sense of eternity. The temple in the Book of Mormon invites us to a worldview that stretches our minds farther than the cosmic myth can reach and more profoundly than the coronation rites and the New Year's drama can begin to unveil. But to those who do not know the legitimate three dimensional temple, that invitation is not extended.

¹³This is from Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 471.

Part 2

Nineteen Classic Temple Characteristics of the Book of Mormon

1. “The temple is the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain”¹⁴

This criterion seems to require walls and a roof that the words of the Book of Mormon do not have. The symbolism is much easier to see in a three dimensional temple. The fundamental idea that makes a mountain a natural temple is that its ascent brings us ever farther away from the noise-filled valley below, and ever closer to the heights where we might meet God. Joseph Smith described the Book of Mormon in those same terms:

I told the brethren that the of Mormon was the most

¹⁴Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 5.

For discussions of the temple as a sacred mountain see Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1972); Richard J. Clifford, “The Temple and the Holy Mountain,” *Temple in Antiquity*, 107-24; John M. Lundquist, “Temple, Covenant, and Law in the Ancient Near East and in the Old Testament,” *Israel’s Apostasy and Restoration*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1988), 279-82; Nibley, “On the Sacred and the Symbolic,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 545-7; Donald W. Parry, “Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 137-38; Stephen D. Ricks and John J. Sroka, “King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 236-71; M. Catherine Thomas, “Hebrews: To Ascend the Holy Mount,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 479-91.

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correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.¹⁵

That is almost precisely how we might describe an ancient temple: to teach us how to “get nearer to God.”

The purpose of the ancient temple was to teach us how to come into the presence of God. The words of the Book of Mormon are replete with those same instructions. The Savior introduced himself to the brother of Jared with these words:

Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. (Ether 3:14)

Moroni’s concluding words are:

32. Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

33. And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye

¹⁵Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 194.

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sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot. (Moroni 10:32-33)

Mormon concluded his great sermon with these words:

47. But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.

48. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen (Moroni 7:47-48).

The outline of the Book of Mormon is the path by which we can climb to the top of the cosmic mountain. We can see that path by rehearsing a quick overview of the entire book, moving from sermon to sermon, and ignoring the history and the stories except for a few that describe some of the most important spiritual events. We get a sense of progression in the ideas expressed by these sermons and events.

In Isaiah and the Psalms, and elsewhere in the scriptures, our movement through the events of this drama is symbolized as climbing a mountain. There, the code words “path,” “way,” and “highway,” “walk,” and “run,” all represent the ordinances and covenants we must do and keep in order to make that ascent. The top of the mountain represents the same success that returning home represents in the cosmic myth. An excellent example of this in the Book of Mormon is the story of the brother of Jared. It is

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both historically true, and symbolically truth. He climbs the mountain where he speaks to God through a cloud. He does this three times, but on the fourth, God puts his hand through the veil and the brother of Jared comes into his presence. That is twice true in the Book of Mormon.

First Nephi is told in a form that is the complete classic story of the cosmic myth. The important thing is that both the history and the principles are true. The outline of First Nephi follows that same basic pattern in this way:

- A) Nephi and his family receive instructions that they must leave home and go to a new land.
- B) The Lord promises Nephi that if he continues to be faithful, he will become a ruler and teacher (king and priest) of his people.
- C) In preparation, Nephi obtains the Brass Plates that contain the covenants the Lord has made with his children.
- D) He also persuades Ishmael and his daughters to accompany them.
- E) They cross the River Laman and enter the wilderness.
- F) Nephi is met by an angel who shows him the tree of life and teaches him how to return to God.
- G) In the desert, Nephi's brothers rebel and the whole company almost perishes. Nephi goes to the top of a mountain where he finds the nourishment that enables him and his party to continue their journey.
- H) Nephi overcomes his enemies by asserting the powers God has given him.
- I) With Nephi as their leader, the people build a boat and go to the land of promise.

Similarly, the sequence of the events of this ascent is found in the arrangement of stories and sermons in the entire Book of Mormon. In collecting those stories, Mormon and his son Moroni

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were able to draw upon an entire one-thousand-year history of the Nephite people in order to find just the right stories and sermons, and in almost the perfect sequence. This is easily seen in the following quick overview of the outline of the Book of Mormon:

- 1) Nephi begins by saying that his father has seen God sitting on his throne, surrounded by the angels. Thus Lehi, like Isaiah and many of the other prophets, revisited his experience in the Council in Heaven, where he received from Jehovah the assignment he is to perform and the words he is to speak.
- 2) Lehi and his family make the necessary preparations to fulfill that assignment.
- 3) They cross the chaotic waters and go to the new world.
- 4) When they get there, Lehi teaches his sons about Adam and Eve and the fall.
- 5) Nephi's psalm asks why are we here when it is so difficult.
- 6) Jacob teaches about the Atonement.
- 7) Nephi quotes a lot of Isaiah which shows that God is the God of this world, and Satan is not.
- 8) Nephi teaches about faith, repentance, baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- 9) Jacob teaches about the importance of keeping the commandments.
- 10) Enos teaches that we must pray
- 11) King Benjamin teaches his people about the importance of obedience. They make a covenant that they will obey, and they receive a new name.
- 12) Abinadi teaches Alma the gospel. He does it by explaining the Savior's sacrifice, then we see Abinadi's sacrifice also.
- 13) At the Waters of Mormon the people are baptized. But Alma's prayer does not mention baptism for the remission of sins, rather this baptism seems to be the token of a

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covenant that the people will support each other, the church, and the kingdom.

14) In the wilderness Alma's followers briefly live the law of consecration.

15) In Alma 5 and 7 the prophet sums up many of the principles of the gospel and admonishes the people to keep their covenant.

16) The Zoramites are plotting to take over the government, so in chapters 12 and 13 Alma teaches Zeezrom about the eternal legitimacy of priesthood and kingship.

17) Alma 29 is a psalm about our missionary responsibilities.

18) Alma 32 teaches us how to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, and eventually how to become as a tree of life.

19) When Alma talks to his three sons.

19a) He teaches his oldest son he must keep sacred things sacred.

19b) He teaches the second that he must be true to the law of his own being.

19c) He tells the third about the importance of the laws of chastity.

20) There are many wars in Book of Mormon history as the people struggle to overcome the aloneness of this world, but Mormon chooses to give the most detail to this one that he identifies as a sacred war between good and evil. He introduces it with a whole series of covenants and covenant names. (There are always new names associated with covenants)

20a) Moroni tears off a piece of his coat (after that it is called "garment" so it is his outer clothing).

20b) He writes a chiastic poem on it. The poem is a covenant, and he gives it the title of "Liberty."

20c) There Mormon inserts the information that those who believe in Christ are called Christians.

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- 20d) Moroni then identifies the land in terms of its geographical boundaries (measuring it and defining it as sacred space) and gives it the same name as the poem— “the land of liberty.”
- 20e) The people come and join in the covenant—that they will keep his commandments and the Lord will protect them in their Liberty.
- 20f) Shortly thereafter we are told that the sons of Helaman make a covenant with the Lord and take upon them the name of “Nephites.”
- 20g) It is in the context of these covenants and covenant names that Mormon then tells the story of the war. The point being that the boys who made and kept their covenants were protected—some were badly hurt, but they all survived.
- 21) After the war, Nephi, Lehi, and the Lamanite leaders are baptized with fire and the Holy Ghost.
- 22) Nephi is given the sealing power.
- 23) Nephi is told that the Savior will soon be born and the covenant of the Atonement is about to be fulfilled.
- 24) Samuel the Lamanite tells the people the Savior is coming, and urges them to get ready to see him.
- 25) The world is cleansed of its unrighteousness, and the Savior comes to his temple.
- 25a) He admonishes them to keep their covenants. He blesses them and their children, and gives them explicit instructions about how they should conduct their lives, and how they should pray.
- 27) Then in Fourth Nephi the people do keep their covenants and live the law of consecration.
- 28) The book of Ether is the story of people who do not keep their covenants.
- 29) The Book of Mormon concludes with a mixed story. Some people are keeping their covenants, others are not.
- 30) The message that is the Book’s crescendo is repeated

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three times: in Ether 12, Moroni 7, and Moroni 10. There the reader is taught about the meaning of faith, hope, and charity.

31) Then, in the last verse of the Book of Mormon, Moroni says essentially, “I am going to heaven; I hope you come too.”

Thus, the Book of Mormon’s structure and outline may be seen as symbolic of the ascent to the top of the sacred mountain, just as the architectural design of the ancient three dimensional temples were symbolic of that same ascent.

2. “The cosmic mountain represents the primordial hillock, the place which first emerged from the waters that covered the earth during the creative process. In Egypt, for example, all temples are seen as representing the primordial hillock”¹⁶

In ancient Israel and elsewhere in the ancient Near East, there is a creation story that says the Garden of Eden was a hill that arose from the chaotic waters.

Nephi apparently spent ten years composing the epic poem that is First Nephi and the beginning of Second Nephi.¹⁷ He tells us that it was not so much his intent to write a history, as it was to use events in his story to illustrate the message he wished to convey.

It is significant that, before they arrived in the new world, he details the families encounter with an horrendous storm. Nephi’s description of the storm shows the waters were truly chaotic. Through those waters Lehi’s party found their way through the chaotic waters to the new world. Another is that in Egyptian religion one’s Ka comes by ship to birth on the earth, then after death goes to the next world in a ship upon the cosmic sea to join the gods.¹⁸ In both the story that Nephi wrote, we discover the chaotic waters to be just where the ought to be. In both Nephi’s narrative and also in the larger cosmic outline of the Book of Mormon, the story of the water is immediately followed

¹⁶Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 2. For discussions of the hillock that was the Garden of Eden see Donald W. Parry, “Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 137-38, 126-151.

¹⁷In 2 Nephi 5:28 Nephi reports that “thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem.” He then tells about making and writing on the small plates, concluding in v. 34, “And it sufficeth me to say that forty years had passed away.”

¹⁸Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1975), 8, 103, 188.

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by Lehi's telling the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.¹⁹

That same motif of newness from chaos appears again in Third Nephi when both the earth and waters erupt into darkened turmoil just before the Savior comes and introduces a millennial culture—a world of peace—to the Nephite people.

In the first instance a new world—in the second, a new world order—arose from the chaos, and in each, the intent was to institute a righteousness that would enable people to come into the presence of God.

That sequence is repeated again in the book of Ether. From the chaotic waters emerged a new society. However, this time, the story is not about the ascent to the top of the mountain. It is about a people who failed to keep their covenants and suffered the inevitable consequences.

The Lord's covenant with Abram, which he sealed by giving him the new name of Abraham, included the fulness of the gospel blessings of kingship and priesthood.²⁰ They are priesthood and all of the ordinances and covenants that are associated with it, family and the blessings of earthly posterity, land with promise of security that it brings, and invulnerability:²¹ "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee," giving absolute assurance that Abraham would be able to fulfill his eternal covenants.

¹⁹Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, 152.

Mowinckel wrote, "There Adam is definitely a divine being, who came into existence before creation, as a cosmogonic principle (macrocosm), as the Primordial Soul, as the original type of the godly, righteous fulfiller of the Law...." Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 426.

²⁰Abraham 2:8-11.

²¹For a discussion of the covenant of invulnerability see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 201-06.

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When those blessings are projected into the hereafter they remain the same: the new covenant name is a “son” (Psalm 2:7); the bond of charity is the sealing power that is also the promise of eternal posterity; the land is the celestial world for the righteous who “shall inherit the earth”; priesthood and invulnerability map to the everlasting blessings of covenantal success and peace in this world; and celestial glory hereafter.

The following chart shows how the sacred mountain can be understood as a temple, and how Moses’s Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple were built as a similitude of that mountain.

You should begin reading the chart from the bottom—the foot of the mountain and the entrance to the Israelite temple—and then ascend each step from there until you reach the summit.²²

²²This chart is from Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 263.

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<i>Sacred Mountain</i>	<i>Solomon's Temple</i>
Top of the Mountain where one sees God (Exodus 24:17, Moses 1:1-2, Matthew 4:8, Mark 9:2, Revelation 21:10, 1 Nephi 11:1, Moses 1:1-2).	Holy of Holies where God's throne sits beneath the wings of the cherubim.
Cloud (<i>shechinah</i> —veil of light) through which one sees the finger of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 9:10; Exodus 24:12-17; Ether 3:4-14, 12:21; Mark 9:7).	Veil of Solomon's Temple "come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift." (Moroni 10:30. See 3 Nephi 12:3, Moroni 7:19-21, Hebrews 6:13-20).
Midway up the Mountain where Moses was crowned by God in the presence of witnesses. After the coronation they shared the same temple feast as we find in 3 Nephi when the Savior also taught about prayer. (Exodus 24:9-11, 3 Nephi 18:1- 25).	Holy Place Central room of the Temple where the king was anointed. It contained the Shewbread Table (an invitation to share a meal with God) and the Menorah (representing the tree of Life and a prayer to enter God's presence.)
Camp of Israel at the foot of the mountain. Sacred space that separated the profane world from the more sacred space of the mountain's heights.	Vestibule Entrance place that separates the profane world from the temple interior.

*Moses patterned the Tabernacle to represent the Holy Mountain.
Later, Solomon built his Temple after the plan of the Tabernacle.*

3. “The temple is often associated with the waters of life which flow from a spring within the building itself—or rather the temple is viewed as incorporating within itself such a spring or as having been built upon the spring....and of the life-giving, saving nature of the waters of life”²³

In ancient Israelite literature, the hill that arose from the chaotic waters became the Garden of Eden. It was then cleansed and watered by the pure, life-giving waters that fell from the heavens or issued from the depths of the earth. At the top of the hill—the center of the garden—was the tree of life and nearby was a spring that was the fountain of living water. That ancient Israelite tradition is reflected in the Old Testament where it says:

9. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

10. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads (Genesis 2:9-10).²⁴

The four rivers flowed from the Garden, one toward each of the cardinal directions. That could only be true if their origin was a hill or a mountain.

In the ancient world, three dimensional temples were frequently built on or near a spring or a lake whose water was used to give life to a garden. The temple described by Ezekiel is built

²³Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 57; see Parry, “Sacred Waters,” in “Garden of Eden,” 129-130.

²⁴See also, Moses 3:9-10, Abraham 5:9-10.

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above the mouth of such a spring.

1. Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.
2. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side....
7. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.
8. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed (Ezekiel 47:1-2, 7-8).

Both the water and the garden it sustains were symbolic of the value of the waters of life. On the rock outcropping where Solomon built his temple, there was no spring (the spring is just outside the city walls). But that same kind of symbolism was found as the great bronze basin that rested on the backs of twelve oxen, like a baptismal font. It is significant then, that Alma teaches about the close relationship of the waters of baptism and the tree of life.²⁵

²⁵See, for example, Alma 5:62 that seems to equate the waters of baptism with the waters of life. In Nauvoo, "There was a font erected in the basement story of the Temple, for the baptism of the dead, the healing of the sick and other purposes; this font was made of wood, and was only intended for the present use; but it is now removed, and as soon as the stone cutters get through with the cutting of the stone for the walls of the

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The connection between the waters of life and the tree of life shown in manmade three dimensional temples was both symbolic and real. That is also true with that connection in the Book of Mormon. Nephi explained:

And it came to pass that I beheld that the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life; which waters are a representation of the love of God; and I also beheld that the tree of life was a representation of the love of God (1 Nephi 11:25).

The most defining, and real experience we can have in this life is to feel the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost and the love of God. The purpose of the Book of Mormon is to bring us to that experience.

Temple, they will immediately proceed to cut the stone for and erect a font of hewn stone.” Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951), 7: 358.

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4. “The temple is associated with the tree of life”²⁶

In ancient Israel, the olive tree represented the tree of life, the olive represented the fruit of that tree, and olive oil was a representation of the waters of life. In Old Testament times, after a ceremonial washing in pure water, kings and priests were anointed with olive oil.²⁷ There are instances in the Old Testament where they were first anointed to become kings, then after they proved themselves, they were anointed king.²⁸ The full coronation ceremony is found in only one place in the scriptures. That is in Isaiah 61 where the list reads:

- A. to give unto them beauty [crown] for [in place of] ashes [removed by washing],
- B. the oil of joy [anointing] for [in place of] mourning,
- C. the garment of praise for [in place of] the spirit of heaviness;
- D. that they might be called [new name] trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he

²⁶Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 57; see C. Wilfred Griggs, “The Tree of Life in Ancient Cultures,” *Ensign* 18, 6 (June 1988): 27-38; Parry, “Thee of Life,” in “Garden of Eden,” 127-29.

²⁷Exodus 30:23-33.

²⁸The Bible records the anointings of six Israelite kings: Saul: 1 Samuel 10:1, David: 2 Samuel 5:3, Solomon: 1 Kings 1:39, Jehu: 2 Kings 9:6, Josh: 2 Kings 11:12, Jehoahaz: 2 Kings 23:30. Absalom was also anointed to be king: 2 Samuel 19:11.

For a discussion of the anointing of Israelite kings, see Donald W. Parry, “Ritual Anointing with Olive Oil in Ancient Israelite Religion,” *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 266-71, 281-83; Stephen D. Ricks, “Olive Culture in the Second Temple Era and Early Rabbinic Period,” *Allegory of the Olive Tree*, 460-76.

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might be glorified [eternal marriage and eternal increase] (Isaiah 61:3).²⁹

The anointing in that ceremony is important. The name-title *Messiah* in Hebrew means anointed,³⁰ just as *Christ* does in Greek. In the New Testament, the Savior's name-title *Christ* means "The Anointed One," which designates him as both King and Priest. The olive tree is the source of that oil, just as the Savior's blood is also representative of the waters of life. Wilfred Greggs has observed:

The New Testament also alludes to the cross of Jesus as a tree. (See Acts 5:30; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24) Some have noticed that the Greek word used in these passages is the same as that used for the tree of life in the Septuagint, different from the usual New Testament word for *tree*. According to a number of sources, some early Christians thought of the cross as a tree of life.³¹

From that, we can understand Nephi and Alma's statements about the fruit of the tree of life and of the waters of life. If the cross is the tree of life, the Savior's body on the cross is as the fruit

29For a discussion of the ancient Israelite coronation ceremony see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 342-59.

30For a discussion of both the royal title, "messiah," and its significance to Israel's kings, see Gene L. Davenport, "The 'Anointed of the Lord' in Psalms of Solomon 17," *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms*, ed. John J. Collins and George W.E. Nickelsburg (Chico, California: Scholars, 1980), 67-92. Davenport shows that the idea of a Davidic messiah persisted long after the Babylonian exile, and that the continued belief in a Davidic messiah was "important primarily as testimony to the dependability of God" (85).

31C. Wilfred Griggs, "The Tree of Life in Ancient Cultures," *Ensign*, June, 1988, 27.

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of the tree, and his blood as the waters of life. It is this symbolism that defines the tree, the fruit, and the waters of life each as “a representation of the love of God.” Thus, when the apostles were at the Last Supper:

Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:26-28).³²

In the Book of Mormon, the Savior’s explanation was far more explicit:

1. And it came to pass that Jesus commanded his disciples that they should bring forth some bread and wine unto him.
2. And while they were gone for bread and wine, he commanded the multitude that they should sit themselves down upon the earth.
3. And when the disciples had come with bread and wine, he took of the bread and brake and blessed it; and he gave unto the disciples and commanded that they should eat.
4. And when they had eaten and were filled, he commanded that they should give unto the multitude.
5. And when the multitude had eaten and were filled, he said unto the disciples: Behold there shall one be ordained among you, and to him will I give

³²Matthew 26:26a-28. See also: Mark 14:22-24, 1 Corinthians 11:24-25, Moroni 4-5.

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power that he shall break bread and bless it and give it unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name.

6. And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread and blessed it and given it unto you.

7. And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

8. And it came to pass that when he said these words, he commanded his disciples that they should take of the wine of the cup and drink of it, and that they should also give unto the multitude that they might drink of it.

9. And it came to pass that they did so, and did drink of it and were filled; and they gave unto the multitude, and they did drink, and they were filled.

10. And when the disciples had done this, Jesus said unto them: Blessed are ye for this thing which ye have done, for this is fulfilling my commandments, and this doth witness unto the Father that ye are willing to do that which I have commanded you.

11. And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you (3 Nephi 18:1-11).

The next day, the Savior explained the sacrament even further, this time in terms that more closely reflected the significance of the fruit of the tree of life and the waters of life:

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And he said unto them: He that eateth this bread eateth of my body to his soul; and he that drinketh of this wine drinketh of my blood to his soul; and his soul shall never hunger nor thirst, but shall be filled (3 Nephi 20:8).

In those two scriptures we find an explanation of the Savior's earlier statement in the Beatitudes:

And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost (3 Nephi 12:6).

The Book of Mormon brings us to understand that the waters of life are a multi-faceted symbol of the cleansing power of baptism, the sacrament, ancient temple washings,³³ of the Holy Ghost, and of the Savior's love.³⁴ But in addition, the book itself is a healing, purifying, cleansing agent,³⁵ as are the waters that come from the Holy of Holies in Ezekiel's temple.³⁶ Moroni's promise is true: as we prayerfully read the Book of Mormon, the Holy Ghost

33For a discussion of the king's being washed as part of the coronation ceremony see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 342-46.

341 Nephi 11:20-25; 15:36; 2 Nephi 26:30; 31:20; Mosiah 2:4,12; 4 Nephi 1:15; Mormon 3:12; Moroni 10:32.

35The promise of Moroni (10:4-5) is realized in the ideas expressed in Moroni 6:1-5 and 10:32-33. It is the Holy Ghost that cleanses (Moroni 6:4), but anyone who reads the book prayerfully will understand that the book itself is an agent by which the Holy Ghost teaches, instructs, and purifies. Knowledge of the book's content will also be a criterion upon which we will be judged (Moroni 10:27). The book's intent is to teach us to "come unto Christ...that ye may become holy, without spot" (Moroni 10:32-33).

36Ezekiel 47:5-12.

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bears testimony that it is of a divine source. That testimony can, individually, heal and cleanse the spiritually crippled; and it can, collectively, cleanse the apostate world. Neither the healing nor the cleansing are symbolic. Each is literal and a necessary preparation for us to come into the presence of God.

While the waters of life and the tree of life are almost always found in tandem in the scriptures and in the ancient temples, by far the more complex symbol is the tree—though often not the tree itself—rather, the fruit of the tree.

Except for in the Garden of Eden and in the heavenly temples described in Ezekiel and Revelation,³⁷ the association of the three dimensional temples with the fruit of the tree of life is wholly symbolic. The Book of Mormon assures its readers that the tree represents the love of God, but other than that, the book's association with the fruit of the tree of life is not at all symbolic. The reality of the tree and its fruit are central to the book's claim to legitimacy and to its function as a linguistic Israelite temple.³⁸ We can learn more from the Book of Mormon about the symbolism and the reality of the tree of life than from any other source, for there are no finer or complete explanations of the tree and its fruit than in 1 Nephi chapters 8 through 15 and Alma 32.³⁹ In addition there are discussions about their meaning in 2 Nephi 2; Alma chapters 5,⁴⁰ 12, and 42:2-6.

Both Lehi and Alma describe the fruit the same way—as pure, white light:

And it came to pass that I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it was most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen (1 Nephi 8:11).

³⁷Revelation 2:7, 22:1-17; Ezekiel 40-47.

³⁸Jacob 3:2.

³⁹The entire chapter is about the tree of life, as is shown in verse 40.

⁴⁰Alma 5:26, 34. Verse 26 seems to be a one verse synopsis of Alma 32.

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The difference is that Alma's description is couched within a promise:

And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure; and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst (Alma 32:42).

The purpose of the Book of Mormon's teachings about the fruit of the tree of life is not so much to help us understand the symbolism of the tree, as it is to bring us to the tree itself so we can enjoy the fruit—then to teach us to help others to come to its feast also. Lehi's response was precisely what we would expect.

12. And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit (1 Nephi 8:12).

And Alma's testimony is as a song:

36. For because of the word which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have seen eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God" (Alma

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36:26).

The Savior, who is the life and light of the world synthesized those feelings into a commission with a question:

I give unto you to be the light of this people. ...do men light a candle and put it under a bushel? Nay, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house”(3 Nephi 12:14-16).

The words are beautiful, but seem obscure until we place them in the context of the ancient Israelite Temple.

There were no candles in the ancient world, the word translated “candlestick” is “lampstand,” just as is the Hebrew word that denotes the Menorah in Solomon’s Temple. The Menorah is a visual representation of the tree of life. In both Moses’s Tabernacle, and Solomon’s Temple it stood in the Holy Place, just outside the veil that opened to the Holy of Holies.

In form, it is shaped like a tree and represents the tree of life. Its branches lift up toward heaven as in prayer. The cups at the ends of its upraised branches were filled with olive oil—the same kind of oil that was used to anoint kings and priests—the fire in the lamps represented the fruit of the tree. The fruit of the tree is a cleansing fire and its waters become an anointing light.

When the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, Titus took its treasure to Rome. There, a monument built to commemorate Titus’s conquest depicts the conqueror’s triumphal procession into the imperial capitol. That monument (Titus’s arch) shows a replica of the Menorah taken from the Jewish temple.⁴¹ The other two photos are also examples of a Menorah, one traditional and the other modern. In the latter, we

⁴¹See Stephen Fine, “The Temple Menorah, Where is it,” in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 31, 4. July-August, 2005): 18-25, 62; Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).

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can easily make out the idea of someone extending his hands in prayer.

In Jewish tradition, the windows in the Jerusalem temple were not to let the light in, but to let the light of the Menorah out to be a beacon and a light to the world.



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In America, when Jesus spoke the Beatitudes, and then delivered the sermon that explained how those commandments were to be accomplished, he was in the Nephite temple, probably sitting on his throne in the Holy of Holies, the veil pulled back so the people could see and hear him,⁴² and the Menorah standing nearby. As he spoke, the crowning command at the conclusion of the Beatitudes to those who were to be “called the children of God” was this:

14. Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the light of this people. A city [Zion] that is set on a hill [sacred mountain] cannot be hid.
15. Behold, do men light a candle and put it under a bushel? Nay, but on a candlestick [the Menorah], and it giveth light to all that are in the house;
16. Therefore let your light so shine before this people, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (3 Nephi 12:14-16).

It is not surprising that at the conclusion of the Beatitudes, the Lord instructed those to whom he spoke to become a light “to this people” The command was that they become a Menorah to bless those who enter the Nephite temple (“and it giveth light to all that are in the house”). The Lord explained to the Prophet Joseph:

That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24).

In other places, God is spoken of as “the Father of lights”

⁴²For a discussion of the Savior’s coronation in America see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 635-46.

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(James 1:20 and D&C 67:9).

To the Prophet Joseph, in a statement which is markedly similar to the conclusion of the Beatitudes, the Savior said:

And even so I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me (D&C 45:9).

The Jews and early Christians prayed standing, with their arms and hands stretched out above them. The principles are immutable and eternal, and represent some facet of the tree of life: receiving light, giving light, and being light are ultimately all the same thing.

God's truth fills the immensity of space, so does his light, so does his love. Thus, they all occupy the same space at the same time or they are simply different ways we have of describing the same thing. If that is so, then love is perceivable (if not tangible) in the same way that light is. We cannot give without first receiving from God, just as we cannot receive without also giving to others. We can not stockpile truth/light/love to our Self, because if we try to capture it, hold it, and make it illuminate our Self only, it ceases to shine, becomes darkness—we become a black hole—if so, we are not a source of light any more. The command at the conclusion of the Beatitudes is that we must be a Menorah to give light to “this people.”

The principle is very simple—and in its simplicity we find the fullness of the words: “I give unto you to be the light.” It is:

8. And no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things, whatsoever shall be entrusted to his care (D&C 12:8).

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In this thing also, the children of God are to become like him:

24. That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day (D&C 50:24).

To be a child of God, an heir, a sacral king or queen, priest or priestess, we must, to the limits of our ability, be like God:

40. For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light; mercy hath compassion on mercy and claimeth her own; justice continueth its course and claimeth its own; judgment goeth before the face of him who sitteth upon the throne and governeth and executeth all things (D&C 88:40).

In our scriptures, Abinadi was the first to describe the Savior as “the light and the life of the world.” It is a perfect description, both in denotation and connotation—and it is a perfect introduction to Abinadi’s ultimate question: “and who shall be his seed”—his heirs—his sons and his daughters?

The light that shines from the Savior also shines through us. This is all very real, and there is nothing symbolic about it. As President David O. McKay explained.

Every man and every person who lives in this world wields an influence, whether for good or for evil. It is not what he says alone; it is not alone what he does. It is what he is. Every man, every person radiates what he or she really is. Every person is a recipient of radiation. The Savior was conscious of

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that. Whenever He came into the presence of an individual, He sensed that radiation— whether it was the woman of Samaria with her past life: whether it was the woman who was to be stoned, or the men who were to stone her; whether it was the statesman, Nicodemus, or one of the lepers. He was conscious of the radiation from the individual. And to a degree so are you. and so am I. It is what we are and what we *radiate* that affects the people around us.

As individuals, we must think nobler thoughts. We must not encourage vile thoughts or low aspirations. We shall radiate them if we do. If we think noble thoughts; if we encourage and cherish noble aspirations, there will be that radiation when we meet people, especially when we associate with them.⁴³

Equally real is Alma's warning:

38. But if ye neglect the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment, behold it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out.

39. Now, this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable; but it is because your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the tree, therefore ye cannot have the fruit thereof.

40. And thus, if ye will not nourish the word,

⁴³David O. McKay, "Radiation of the Individual," *The Instructor* (October 1964): 373-74. Reprinted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003), 227. [emphasis in original]

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looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life (Alma 32:38-40).

5. “The temple is built on separate, sacral, set apart space”⁴⁴

Sacred space is the place where God and humans meet. It is a mountain, a building, a grove—anywhere that is definable by its geography, and divine by its use. An important characteristic of sacred space is sacred time. In our “cosmic system,” the most sacred of all space is the throne room in the temple of Kolob. The time prophets experience there is sacred time. There prophets see our system’s past, present, and future as a single event.

In Section 93, God defines truth as knowing a thing in sacred time—“And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come ” (D&C 93:24). When we are in sacred space, we learn in sacred time. That is true because the principles we learn are eternal, or because, as was true with Moses, Enoch, and the brother of Jared, there are no linear time restraints on what we know and can experience there. Thus Moses can report that he saw every person who has or will live on the earth, and Alma can express the immutable joy of being in the presence of God.

Things learned in sacred space are also understood in sacred time. Thus the *Book of Enoch* begins,

Enoch a righteous man, whose eyes were opened by
God, saw the vision of the Holy One in the heavens,
which the angels showed me, and from them I heard
everything, and from them *I understood as I saw*.⁴⁵

44Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 57; see Donald W. Parry, “Demarcation between Sacred Space and Profane Space: the Temple of Herod Model,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 413-39.

45*Book of Enoch*, in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, 2 vols. Translated and edited by R. H. Charles. 2: 188-277 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 1:1. [emphasis added]

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Similarly, Nephi introduces us to his father's vision with the same assurance. To think is to consider—to understand. The past tense of “think” is “thought.” So Nephi tells us that his father “was carried away in a vision, even that he saw the heavens open, and he *thought* he saw God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels.” Their testimonies are the same: the visions were not just a picture show, they were an academic experience of the first order. Such understanding is a function of knowing in sacred time. The Atonement, for example, may be understood as being applicable in sacred as well as linear time.

The set-apart space in the Book of Mormon is its sacral language that can be neither seen nor understood except within the academic/spiritual context of what was learned in the ancient three dimensional temple. The authors and translator successfully divided its text into two separate stories, told in two separate “languages,” each within the same English text.

Double speech is to speak, write, or understand two languages within the same words without losing the meaning of either. Comedians use it all the time: it is the double meanings in their jokes that make us laugh. Teenagers use it too. They have their own code language so old fogies cannot catch the undertones of what they say. The scriptures use it extensively. Perhaps the reason many passages in Isaiah and the Psalms and elsewhere in the Bible have been so faithfully preserved is because the post-exilic editors did not understand what they might otherwise have taken out.

To say that the Book of Mormon is written in double speech, is to say that its surface story is written in regular, dictionary-type English; but that there is an encoded language buried *within* its English text. The code may be in the special use of unique words or in the application of a sequences of ideas, or both. Or the code may be just ordinary words used to mean precisely what they say, as for example, in the blessing given the

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king in the 45th Psalm:

And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand [here the meaning is literal] shall teach thee terrible [awesome] things” (Psalm 45:4).

Or in the Lord’s promise to Job, “that thine own right hand can save thee” (Job 40:14). Again with the same literal meaning. Those who know the meaning, already know the code. The code was taught in the ancient three dimensional temple, and is as straightforward and easy to read as the story written in the surface language of the scripture. An example is what Lehi said when he was speaking to his sons:

10. But behold, when the time cometh that they shall dwindle in unbelief, after they have received so great blessings from the hand of the Lord [same emphasis]—having a knowledge of the creation of the earth, and all men, knowing the great and marvelous works of the Lord from the creation of the world; having power given them to do all things by faith; having all the commandments from the beginning, and having been brought by his infinite goodness into this precious land of promise—(2 Nephi 1:10).

In this way, the Book of Mormon tells at least two concurrent stories written with the same words. The obvious one is the history of the people and the testimony of the Savior. That history and the gospel principles it incorporates may be read by anyone who is literate enough to read it, and it may be read on many “levels,” depending on the need, background, and understanding the reader brings to it. Nephi explained:

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3 For my soul delighteth in plainness; for after this manner doth the Lord God work among the children of men. For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding; for he speaketh unto men according to their language, *unto their understanding* (2 Nephi 31:3).

The plainness Nephi describes is not simplicity, and it is not the same plainness to everyone, but to each individually according to “*their understanding*.” Nephi’s encoded sermon in this chapter is also very straightforward— but only to those who know the meaning of the sequence he is describing.

Similarly, the underlying story that is written in the encoded, sacred, ancient temple subtext of the Book of Mormon begins at the beginning of the book. It is a sequential description of the patterns, principles, ordinances and covenants of the New Year rites and drama, and the ancient temple's coronation ceremony.

An important purpose of the surface story is to introduce its readers to the language and meaning of the sacral story. This is done “line upon line” as the sacred story is unfolded to the initiated reader by the Holy Ghost. The insights are an invitation to learn the sacred language.

It is this sacred temple drama and language that gives the Book of Mormon its unfathomable depth, and makes it “new” to the faithful reader each time he reads it. But even though it is in the same words, the encoded sacred message is unreadable to those who are not privy to the language and workings of a three dimensional temple. My object here is *not* to teach the sacral language, it is only to show that it is really there, and that it can be easily read. Two examples will suffice. We will examine one here, and the second when we discuss the phrase “prosper in the land” in number 9 of the typology.

One of the seeming most difficult and obscure passages in the Book of Mormon is the Savior's paraphrasing of Isaiah in Third

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Nephi chapter 20. It will not take many signals for us to transform that passage into something that is not only beautiful, but that is also very easy to understand. But the transformation will only happen for the initiated reader. When it does happen, he will think, “Oh, is that all. I knew that already, I just hadn’t seen it there that way before.” And that is precisely the point. The reason the sacral language is not an impenetrable mystery is because those who know the ancient temple already know how to read the sacred language and therefore how to enter the sacred space of the Book of Mormon.

30. And it shall come to pass that the time cometh, when the fulness of my gospel shall be preached unto them;
31. And they shall believe in me, that I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and shall pray unto the Father in my name.
32. Then shall their watchmen lift up their voice, and with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye.
33. Then will the Father gather them together again, and give unto them Jerusalem for the land of their inheritance.
34. Then shall they break forth into joy—Sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Father hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.
35. The Father hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father; and the Father and I are one.
36. And then shall be brought to pass that which is written: Awake, awake again, and put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for henceforth there shall

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no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

37. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

38. For thus saith the Lord: Ye have sold yourselves for naught, and ye shall be redeemed without money.

39. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that my people shall know my name; yea, in that day they shall know that I am he that doth speak.

40. And then shall they say: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings unto them, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings unto them of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion: Thy God reigneth! (3 Nephi 20:30-40)

Now, having read it, let's examine it closely.

v. 30 And it shall come to pass that the time cometh, when the fullness of my gospel shall be preached unto them.

“Fullness” is a code word that means exactly what it says: “fullness.” The key to reading some encoded texts is to understand them to mean precisely what they say. On the other hand, the easiest way to put Isaiah or any of the Book of Mormon prophets into the pot called “too difficult to understand,” and then to keep them in that pot with the lid on, is for us to assume we know more than the ancients knew. If we do that, then we assume the Book of Mormon prophets did not know all about the Atonement, pre-mortal existence, fore-ordination, eternal marriage, all of the ordinances and covenants, and all the other ideas that belong to the ancient Israelite temple. Then, when we read Alma, for example,

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we can say to our Self, “Alma did not know such and such a thing, so he can't be talking about such concepts.” Thereby we miss almost everything.

As soon as we assume we know more than they did, the curtain before the sacred space is closed, and we cannot see afar off. But if, on the other hand, we assume the prophets knew all and more than we know, and if we seek to discover the context in which those prophets were writing, we will have to reach out to the very edge of our own understanding to find what they say. And it will be a joyful reach. It is only out there where we will find Isaiah, along with Nephi, Alma, Mormon, Paul, and Peter all writing in a sacred language that is simple and easy to understand.

Since there can be no “fullness” of the gospel where there is not also a knowledge of the Israelite temple and every doctrine that it encompassed, the phrase “fullness of the gospel” immediately tells us that he has entered the sacred space of the Book of Mormon.

*v. 31 And they shall believe in me, that I am Jesus
Christ, the Son of God, and shall pray unto the
Father in my name.*

The key word is “pray.” “In” is also important. “In” means *in*. One of the characteristics of the sacred language is that words we often read casually often speak with all their power, and by so doing, give great depth of meaning to what we habitually pigeon hole as “I already understand that, so I don't have to think about it anymore.” A similar scripture is:

Wherefore, I beseech of you, brethren, that ye should search diligently *in* the light of Christ [shechinah] that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will *lay hold* upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ (Moroni 7:19).

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The next verse of 3 Nephi 20 begins with the word “then.” “Then” can mean thereafter, or it can create a causal relationship between the prayer and what follows in that next verse. In this instance it is the latter. So the “then” tells us that the words which follow must either describe the results of the prayer, or else they must describe the method by which the prayer is said.

*v. 32 Then shall their watchmen lift up their voice,
and with the voice together shall they sing;*

The watchmen sing in unison. Now, given the context of the “fullness of the gospel,” we can easily recognize their song where words are spoken or sung in unison and where the movements of their dance are also in unison.⁴⁶

Those code words, “fullness,” “pray,” and “together” are enough to give us all we need in order for us to understand the exact context to which the Savior's words have taken us, and thereby, the key to understanding the plain meaning of this paraphrase of Isaiah.

Even though the word “watchmen” is not actually found in the following, there is a similarity in the meaning of these passages. Alma said:

Nevertheless the children of God were commanded
that they should gather themselves together oft, and
join in fasting and mighty prayer in behalf of the
welfare of the souls of those who knew not God

⁴⁶See Nibley, “Appendix V, Cyril of Jerusalem’s Lectures,” in *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 279-283; Nibley, “Early Christian Prayer Circle,” in *Mormonism and Early Christianity* 45-99; Nibley, “Prayer,” in “On the Sacred and the Symbolic,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 568-9; Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, 313-16; Tvedtnes, “Temple Prayer in Ancient Times,” in *Temple in Time and Eternity*, 79-98.

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(Alma 6:6).

And this story is told in Third Nephi:

And it came to pass that as the disciples of Jesus were journeying and were preaching the things which they had both heard and seen, and were baptizing in the name of Jesus, it came to pass that the disciples were gathered together and were united in mighty prayer and fasting. And Jesus again showed himself unto them, for they were praying unto the Father in his name; and Jesus came and stood in the midst [“midst” means center, as in the center of a circle] of them, and said unto them: What will ye that I shall give unto you? (3 Nephi 27:1-2)

Elder McConkie commented on those last verses this way:

The Nephite Twelve “were united in mighty prayer and fasting...They were praying unto the Father in the name of Jesus.” This is the perfect pattern for gaining revelation or whatever is needed. In this setting, the record says: “And Jesus came and stood in the midst of them, and said to them: What will ye that I shall give you?”⁴⁷

for they shall see eye to eye.

“Eye to eye” may mean there is no hard feelings or disagreements among the participants. It may mean that they can look across the circle and see into each other's faces. It may mean what it meant to Alma.

⁴⁷Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978). 557-8.

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For because of the word which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have seen eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God (Alma 36:26).

We now move from the restoration of the “fullness of the gospel” to its being taken to the Jews:

v. 33 Then will the Father gather them [the watchmen] together again, and give unto them [those who pray] Jerusalem for the land of their inheritance.

v. 34 Then shall they [those who are thus gathered] break forth into joy—Sing together [the same song], ye waste places [sacred space that had become profane, but now is sacred again] of Jerusalem; for the Father hath comforted his people,

“Comfort” is sometimes a very important code word. The words “comfort” and “comforter” have a unique meaning in the scriptures. An example of their meaning is Isaiah 61. The key to understanding that chapter is D&C 138:42, which quotes Isaiah 61:1 to let us know that the Isaiah chapter is a prophecy about salvation for the dead. It is the next verse in Isaiah that uses the word “comfort.” Verse 2 reads:

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn (Isaiah 61:2).

The Savior paraphrased that verse in the Beatitudes when he said:

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4 And again, blessed are all they that mourn, for
they shall be comforted (3 Nephi 12:4).

Anderson explained the word “comfort” to mean the “cessation of mourning”—not just a “simple act of emotional identification,” but “the movement from mourning to joy.” “Comfort is equated with the restoration of life.”⁴⁸

48 Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance: The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), This verb “to comfort” (*n-h-m*) does not connote a simple act of emotional identification. Comfort can imply either the symbolic action of *assuming the state of mourning* alongside the mourner, or it can have the nuance of *bringing about the cessation of mourning*. In grammatical terms, the former usage reflects a *processual* usage of the verb, while the latter usage would be *resultative*. (p.84. Italics are in the original) In footnote # 74 Anderson says examples where “the resultative state are present (Gen 37:35; 2 Sam 12:24 (for Isa see n. 77); Jer 31:13; Zech 1:17; Ps 71:20-21; 86:17.”

The latter usage, to bring about the cessation of mourning, is very common in prophetic oracles of deliverance. The famous exhortation of Isaiah 40:1, “Comfort, comfort, my people,” comes to mind immediately. As Westermann noted, the term conveys “God’s intervention to help and restore.” Indeed, the term has this meaning in most of Second Isaiah. (p.85).

That statement is very significant. “Second Isaiah” is what scholars call the latter half of Isaiah, usually beginning with chapter 40. Because it is different from the first half of Isaiah, they argue that it was written by a different person who lived after the Babylonian conquest. However that is not true because the Book of Mormon quotes from “Second Isaiah” from the Brass Plates. Many scholars have observed the close relationship between “Second Isaiah” and the Psalms. It is my view that the last half of Isaiah (beginning with chapter 40) is a commentary of the New Year festival drama, and is therefore one of the major keys in reconstructing the endowment/enthronement ceremonies and putting the Psalms back in their original order. If that is true, then it is very

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To comfort is to empower, and the empowerment in Isaiah 61 is to administer the ancient coronation ceremony of kings and priests.⁴⁹

he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

To be redeemed may mean purchased, ransomed, or being helped by a kinsman. However in the Book of Mormon and elsewhere it often means to be brought back into the presence of the Savior, as in the following verses:

The Savior to the brother of Jared.

And when he [the brother of Jared] had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed [present tense] from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show

significant that the word “comfort” as is used in Second Isaiah does not mean a pat on the head, but the actual “bringing about the cessation of mourning” through an empowerment.

On page 86 Anderson writes, “In this text, comfort describes the movement from mourning to joy. This process could also be illustrated in the psalms of lamentation.”

In footnote #78 he adds, “Note, e.g., Ps 71:20-21. In this text, comfort is equated with the restoration of life and being raised from the netherworld. Psalm 86:17 begins with a petition that God hear the prayer and grant “joy” to the psalmist (v. 4). The psalmist hopes to be delivered from the underworld (v. 13).”

49 For a discussion of the Israelite king’s coronation ceremony see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 336-400. This chapter of Isaiah is the only place in the scriptures where it is found in its entirety. This same coronation ceremony was used in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, and in modern states such as England and Japan.

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myself unto you (Ether 3:9-18).

Lehi to his son Jacob:

I know that thou art [present tense] redeemed, because of the righteousness of thy Redeemer; for thou hast beheld that in the fullness of time he cometh to bring salvation unto men. And thou hast beheld in thy youth his glory (2 Nephi 2:3-4).

Lehi about himself:

But behold, the Lord hath [past tense] redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love (2 Nephi 1:15).

Helaman to Captain Moroni:

And now, my beloved brother, Moroni, may the Lord our God, who has redeemed us and made us free, keep you continually in his presence (Alma 58:41).

Samuel the Lamanite about the final judgment:

But behold, the resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea, even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of the Lord. Yea, and it bringeth to pass the condition of repentance, that whosoever repenteth the same is not hewn down and cast into the fire; but whosoever repenteth not is hewn down and cast into the fire; and there cometh upon them again a spiritual death, yea, a second death, for they are cut off again as to things pertaining to righteousness (Helaman 14:17-18).

The Savior now moves our attention from the conversion of the Jews to the time when there will be temples all over the earth:

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v. 35 The Father hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father; and the Father and I are one.

It was on the mountain Moses saw the Lord write the Ten Commandments with his finger. It was on a different mountain where the Lord extended his hand and the Brother of Jared saw the finger of the Lord, just before he also saw the Savior.

v. 36 And then shall be brought to pass that which is written: Awake, awake again, and put on thy strength,

Strength, as we will next be told, is a descriptive code for sacred clothing.⁵⁰

O Zion [Zion is the pure in heart]; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for

⁵⁰Sometimes the ceremonial clothing have different names.

In Psalm 45, after a ceremony where “grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.” The king is instructed,

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things (Psalm 45:3)

There, “glory” and “majesty” seem to be names of clothing, just as, “majesty and excellency” and “glory and beauty” are in Job. When the Lord asked,

9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty....

14 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

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*henceforth there shall no more come into thee the
uncircumcised and the unclean .
v. 37 Shake thyself from the dust;*

In the creation story, man is made from the dust of the earth.

*arise, sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the
bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.*

The implication of *arise* is that one stands to make a covenant, as in 2 Kings 23:1-3, and Psalm 82. A covenant with God is an enabling power.

*v. 38 For thus saith the Lord: Ye have sold
yourselves for naught, and ye shall be redeemed
[brought into the presence of God] without money.
v. 39 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that my people
shall know my name;*

Knowing the name of God is very important, as the psalmist testified:

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust
in thee:
for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee
(Psalm 9:10).

Sometimes, as in the story of King Benjamin and his people, when they learn the name of Christ they also take that name upon themselves. In the scriptures, new names are so closely associated with new covenants, that the words “name” and “covenant” can often be interchanged without changing the meaning of the sentence. As in “for my name's [covenant's] sake will I defer mine anger” (Isaiah in 1 Nephi 20:9).

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*v. 39b yea, in that day they shall know that I am he
that doth speak.*

As was true with Moses when he stood in the presence of God with the fire of the burning bush [see *sheckinah* in the Bible dictionary] separating them, we can only really know the name of God when he tells it to us himself. Therefore, only in sacred space can we learn, first hand, the name of God.

*v. 40 And then shall they say: How beautiful upon
the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good
tidings unto them, that publisheth peace; that
bringeth good tidings unto them of good, that
publisheth salvation.*⁵¹

That may be understood in light of what Abinadi said:

15. And O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet!

16. And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that are still publishing peace!

17. And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who shall hereafter publish peace, yea, from this time henceforth and forever!

18. And behold, I say unto you, this is not all. For O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that is the founder of peace, yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people; yea, him who has granted salvation unto his people (Mosiah 15:15-18).

⁵¹For a discussion of the meaning of the establishment of Israelite king's feet see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 408-17.

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Please note—and this is very important—whatever understanding you gained as you read those verses came from the reservoir of your prior knowledge and the Holy Ghost. I told you nothing to reveal to you the things you learned, except to call your attention to things you already knew. Reading scriptures in that way is walking in sacred space. Understanding them is moving through sacred time.

The story and message told in the sacral language of the Book of Mormon is its sacred space. That sacred space is kept more secure in the Book of Mormon than sacred space could ever be secured in a three dimensional temple. Pompey, the Roman general, could ride his horse into the Holy of Holies of the temple at Jerusalem to see for himself what was there, but only the initiated can ever see first-hand the sacred space of the Book of Mormon. There is a linguistic veil that separates the surface story and message that can be read by any literate person, from the sacred space of the Book of Mormon. But while everything about that surface story invites us to discover its veil and learn its sacral language, the encoded story and message can only be read within the context of the legitimate functions of a three dimensional temple.

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6. “The temple is oriented toward the four world regions or cardinal directions, and to various celestial bodies such as the polar star. As such, it is, or can be, an astronomical observatory, the main purpose of which is to assist the temple priests in regulating the ritual calendar.”

“A ritual calendar”: the Book of Mormon itself is to the initiated a detailed sequential description of the way—of the stations along the path we must follow—to come into the presence of God. As the position of the stars, the light of the sun, and the phases of the moon taught the ancient priests the order of things, so the Book of Mormon teaches one where one’s Self is in his personal movement through the sequence of the cosmic myth and the reality of the ancient temple drama. The sequence is universal in that it is the same for everyone.

Yet it is individualistic in every detail. For even though the mountain is the same, every person climbs it at a different pace, stops to rest at a different place, or pauses to admire a different panoramic view—or at times to marvel at the glory in the minute beauty of just one columbine. The Book of Mormon abounds with magnificent panoramas and with individual flowers. Even though it offers each person an ascent that is so very personalized, there is a formality of the sequence of events and progressive stations it recommends. It presents a more perfect pattern by which we may structure our lives than could ever be deduced from the stars, or could ever be incorporated into the physical structure of any building. In this regard, the Book of Mormon is a more perfect temple than any actual building could ever be.

6b)The earthly temple is also seen as a copy or counterpart of a heavenly model.⁵²

There is a Temple in Kolob with a throne where the Father presides, and another from which the Savior conducts the affairs of the Council in Heaven. Ezekiel tried to describe the throne, but his words fell short of their purposes (Ezekiel 1:26-28).

Often, prophets who return to the Council in vision mention the throne. Two examples are Isaiah's own account:

1. I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.
2. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings (Isaiah 6:1b-2a).

And Nephi's description of Lehi's vision:

8. ...and he thought he saw God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God (1 Nephi 1:8).

⁵²The references in this footnote attest to the ancient belief that Solomon's temple was built to represent the temple of God, and its throne, his throne. That celestial temple is understood to be the place where the Council in Heaven met. Paul alludes to that in the first chapter of Ephesians, and Joseph Fielding Smith (quoted below). In the poetic version of D&C 76, the Prophet Joseph identified the place where the Council met as Kolob(also quoted below). See Lundquist, "Cosmic Sanctuary," in "Temple, Covenant, and Law," 289-291; Nibley, "Circle and the Square," *Temple and Cosmos*, 139-172; Nibley, "What Makes a Temple? The Cosmic Plan," in "What Is a Temple?" 22-25; Parry, Jay A. and Donald W. Parry. "The Temple in Heaven: Its Description and Significance." In *Temples of the Ancient World*, edited by Donald W. Parry, ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 515-532.

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When Solomon built his Temple, its Holy of Holies contained a throne that represented the throne of God. On either side were two great cherubim (1 Kings 6).⁵³ Some scholars say they guard the throne, others suggest they are to be God's messengers. They serve the same function as members of the Council in Heaven, so probably represent members of that Council.

In February 1843, the Prophet Joseph wrote in poetry form his personal version of the 76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. The poem, called *A Vision*, was published in the *Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1843, and republished in the *Millennial Star*, August, 1843. It is full of references to sacred space, sacred time, the heavenly temple, and the throne of God. Following are two groups of stanzas from that poem. In the first, the Prophet identifies Kolob as the seat of the Council in Heaven.

His throne is the heavens—his life-time is all
Of eternity *now*, and eternity *then*;
His union is power, and none stays his hand,
The Alpha, Omega, for ever. Amen.

For thus saith the Lord, in the spirit of truth,
I am merciful, gracious, and good unto those
That fear me, and live for the life that's to come:
My delight is to honour the Saints with repose,

That serve me in righteousness true to the end;
Eternal's their glory and great their reward.
I'll surely reveal all my myst'ries to them —

⁵³Seraphims and cherubims are symbolic creatures who attend the throne of God. Cherubims were embroidered on the great veil of both Moses's Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple. They are symbols representing the members of the Council in Heaven. Their wings represent their power to move and to act, as in D&C 77:4.

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The great hidden myst'ries in my kingdom stor'd;

From the council in Kolob, to time on the earth,
And for ages to come unto them I will show
My pleasure and will, what the kingdom will do
Eternity's wonders they truly shall know.

Great things of the future I'll show unto them,
Yea, things of the vast generations to rise;
For their wisdom and glory shall be very great,
And their pure understanding extend to the skies.⁵⁴

In the second set he bears his testimony.

Hosanna, for ever! They open'd anon,
And the glory of God shone around where I was;
And there was the Son at the Father's right hand,
In a fulness of glory and holy applause.

I beheld round the throne holy angels and hosts,
And sanctified beings from worlds that have been,
In holiness worshipping God and the Lamb,
For ever and ever. Amen and amen.

And now after all of the proofs made of him,
By witnesses truly, by whom he was known,
This is mine, last of all, that he lives; yea, he lives!
And sits at the right hand of God on his throne.

And I heard a great voice bearing record from heav'n,
He's the Savior and only begotten of God;
By him, of him, and through him,
the worlds were all made,

⁵⁴Joseph Smith, *A Vision*, published in the *Times and Seasons*,
February 1, 1843.

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Even all that career in the heavens so broad.

Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,
Are sav'd by the very same Savior of ours;
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons
By the very same truths and the very same powers.⁵⁵

While we have no extensive description of the heavenly temple itself, we do know something of its purposes. One such description of its purposes occupies the whole first chapter of Ephesians. Verses 20-22 identify the place:

20. Which he [the Father] wrought in Christ, when
he [the Father] raised him [the Savior] from the
dead, and set him [the Savior] at his [the Father's]
own right hand in the heavenly places,
21. Far above all principality, and power, and might,
and dominion, and every name that is named, not
only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave
him to be the head over all things to the church
(Ephesians 1:20-22).

The event described there is the enthronement of the resurrected Savior, the place, then, must be the Father's throne room, which is the Holy of Holies in the heavenly temple. With that understanding of the phrase, "heavenly places," Paul's introduction takes on a celestial, pre-mortal meaning:

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, who [the Father] hath blessed us with all
spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

⁵⁵Joseph Smith, *A Vision*, published in the *Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1843.

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4. According as he [the Father] hath chosen us in him [the Savior] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love (Ephesians 1:3-4).⁵⁶

In support of the idea that there was a church organization with enabling ordinances in the pre-mortal spirit world, President Joseph Fielding Smith explained:

During the ages in which we dwelt in the pre-mortal state we not only developed our various characteristics and showed our worthiness and ability, or the lack of it, but we were also where such progress could be observed. It is reasonable to believe that there was a Church organization there. The heavenly beings were living in a perfectly arranged society. Every person knew his place. Priesthood, without any question, had been conferred and the leaders were chosen to officiate. Ordinances pertaining to that pre-existence were required, and the love of God prevailed.⁵⁷

He then quoted Ephesians 1:3-4. He might also have used I Nephi 20 & 21, Isaiah 61:1, D&C 93:21-23, Alma 12-13, Isaiah 6, or Psalm 23. There was, in that world of “green pastures” and “still waters,” a clearly defined “way”— “the paths of righteousness.”⁵⁸

As Ephesians opens a portal that calls to our remembrance the ordinances and covenants of our pre-mortal experiences, Alma

⁵⁶For a discussion of Ephesians 1 and our premortal covenants see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 549-54.

⁵⁷Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (Genealogical Society of Utah, 1949), 50-1.

⁵⁸For a discussion of Psalm 23 see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 431-41.

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12 and 13 opens it wider still. If we read his twice-used phrase, “in the first place,” to mean “in the *first* place,” Alma is telling about our experiences a very, very long time ago.

7. “Temples, in their architectonic orientation, express the idea of a successive ascension toward heaven.”⁵⁹

The key to the design of this sacred mountain and the concept that makes the Book of Mormon itself a splendid representation of the idea of successive ascensions toward heaven is the scriptural use of the idea of a “straight” line.

In the scriptures, a “straight” line is not defined as the shortest distance between two points. Rather, *straightness means that one does not digress by turning to the right or to the left*. Thus walking the straight and narrow path has to do with our integrity to stay on the path, as well as with our progress along the way. (see Deuteronomy 5:32, 1 Samuel 6:12, 2 Kings 22:2, Alma 56:37, D&C 3:2)

Using the laws and tools of geometry, there are three ways to construct such a “straight” line.

The first way is by using a ruler to draw a line between two points. Theoretically, such a line can be continued forever, from eternity to eternity, and is without beginning or end. The single line made by a ruler, drawn between two points is like the straight line between one’s Self and the pinnacle of the sacred mountain. When the Garden of Eden is the hillock/temple, the tree of life was at its top and center. A straight line is the path that every individual must walk from wherever he or she is just now, in order to get to the tree of life, that is, in order to “come unto Christ.”

The second way to draw a straight line is to use a compass

⁵⁹Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 57-58

For discussions on the heavenly ascent see Richard D. Draper, and Donald W. Parry, “Seven Promises to Those Who Overcome: Aspects of Genesis 2-3 in the Seven Letters,” *Temple in Time and Eternity*. 121-41; William J. Hamblin, “Temple Motifs in Jewish Mysticism,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 440-76; M. Catherine Thomas, “Hebrews: To Ascend the Holy Mount,” *Temples of the Ancient World* 479-91; Hamblin, “Temple Motifs,” 440-76.

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to draw a circle around a single point. A circle is a “straight” line in that the line drawn by the compass is always exactly the same distance from the center point, without varying to the right or left. This straight line is also without beginning or end. A circle made by a compass inscribes a boundary, and can thereby delineate sacred space. (This may be implied in Abraham 3:23 and 3 Nephi 17 where the word “midst” may indicate the center of the circle) Or a circle can be used to diagram a sequence of events such as those of the cosmic myth, the coronation ceremony, or the Israelite temple drama, where one leaves home and ultimately returns again —“triumphant” to the same place. In that case, the diagram of the cosmic myth would not look like an open triangle, with its ends at different points, but like a circle where the beginning and ending place are the same.

The third way to draw a straight line is to use a ruler, a square, and a compass to create a golden rectangle. Within it one draw a perfect spiral. Each part of this spiral is proportionally perfect in relation to its focal point—creating a theoretically possible infinity of concentric circles that expand to create a spiral where each portion is proportionally perfect replicas of the one on either side of itself and also of every other circle in the spiral—with no variance to the right or to the left, from the infinitely small to the infinitely forever.

In the Book of Mormon, this spiral pattern is a multi-dimensional depiction of successive steps in our ascension toward heaven. Nephi promised:

For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round (1 Nephi 10:19).

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Or a spiral may be used to show a sequence of other ideas where the beginning and ending of the sequence are the same, but higher. The cycle that is the Book of Mormon begins with Lehi at the Council in Heaven and concludes with:

And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen (Moroni 10:34).

There are many smaller spirals within the larger spiral that constitutes the text of the Book of Mormon: First Nephi, where they begin by leaving the wealth of their home to go into a desert—and end by leaving the desert, crossing the water, and arriving at a promised land. Second Nephi to Third Nephi 11 is another. It begins by Lehi saying that he and some of his sons have been in the presence of God, follows the entire ancient ritual and drama, and concludes with the people being brought into the presence of the Savior. The plan of salvation is a similar circle. The Lord said,

2. For God doth not walk in crooked paths, neither doth he turn to the right hand nor to the left, neither doth he vary from that which he hath said, therefore his paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round” (D&C 3:2).

That same pattern is represented in the many ancient three dimensional temples by steps leading up to the next level of sacredness. Within the overall text of the sacred language of the Book of Mormon there is a progression that becomes a spiral when their ideas are laid end to end. This spiral constitutes a most detailed description of the “way.” For that reason the spiral of the Golden Section is the best geometric form to demonstrate the inter-

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related circles described sequentially in the Book of Mormon as its sacred language leads its readers in a straight path through these successive cycles of their “ascension toward heaven.”

8. “The plan and measurements of the temple are revealed to the king or prophet, and the plan must be carefully carried out....”⁶⁰

When God is going to meet his children somewhere, then it is he who sets the time and place. Men may not presume to create a space, call it sacred, and invite God to come, without first receiving directions from him. If people are going to build a temple, it is God who must initiate its construction. When he does that, he always gives explicit instructions. When a prophet builds a temple, the Lord tells him its plan as well as its measurements.⁶¹

This was true, also, of the Book of Mormon. The book matches this criterion in that part of the typology as closely as did Moses's Tabernacle or Solomon's temple, and it meets it in two separate ways.

The prophets who wrote the Book of Mormon testified that the decisions about which ideas would be included in which parts of the book were not their decisions to make. Rather, the book's outline, structure, and content were carefully supervised by the

60Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 58

For discussions on God's instructions to build temples see Marion D. Hanks, “Christ Manifested to His People,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 7-11; Carol L. Meyers, “Jachin and Boaz in Religious and Political Perspective,” *Temple in Antiquity*, 143-45; Stephen D. Ricks and Michael A. Carter, “Temple-Building Motifs: Mesopotamia, Ancient Israel, Ugarit, and Kirtland,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 152-76.

61God told Noah the dimensions of the ark (Genesis 6:14); he told Moses the dimensions of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:10), and of the tabernacle (Exodus 26-27), and described the clothes the High Priest should wear (Exodus 28). He gave Solomon the pattern for his Temple (2 Chronicles 3). He gave Joseph Smith the measurements of the Kirtland Temple (D&C 94) He is equally explicit about future temples. Ezekiel gives us precise measurements of a temple yet to be built (Ezekiel 40-43), and John gives us the measurements of a temple in the celestial world (Revelation 21).

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Lord.

“Measurement” is a good word, if by it we mean the doctrinal length, breadth, and height, to which each segment of the book would reach. A few quotes from Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni will suffice:

25. But the things which thou shalt see hereafter thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them (1 Nephi 14:25).

11. Behold, I was about to write them, all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying: I will try the faith of my people (3 Nephi 26:11).⁶²

26. Wherefore, I, Moroni, am commanded to write these things that evil may be done away, and that the time may come that Satan may have no power upon the hearts of the children of men, but that they may be persuaded to do good continually, that they may come unto the fountain of all righteousness and be saved (Ether 8:26).

12. Therefore I, Mormon, do write the things which have been commanded me of the Lord. And now I, Mormon, make an end of my sayings, and proceed to write the things which have been commanded me (3 Nephi 26:12).

There is no more dramatic example of that than Nephi’s:

⁶²See also 1 Nephi 14:28; 2 Nephi 4:25; 3 Nephi 26:11; Ether 5:1, 13:13.

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4. Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.
5. For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.
6. Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and there will be no more doctrine given until after he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh. And when he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do
7. And now I, Nephi, cannot say more; the Spirit stoppeth mine utterance, and I am left to mourn because of the unbelief, and the wickedness, and the ignorance, and the stiffneckedness of men; for they will not search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in plainness, even as plain as word can be (2 Nephi 32:4-7).

Nephi had been writing about faith, repentance, baptism and the power of the Holy Ghost, so his words could be read within the context of the first principles of the gospel. Now he wished to go on and say more, but the Lord told him he could not. If he had been more explicit or talked about other things they would have seemed out of sequence in the overall structure of the book.

For example, charity and the law of consecration are essentially the same thing: Charity is what one is, when the law of consecration is what one does. Faith [*pistis*], hope, and charity⁶³ are such a powerful triumvirate that the explanation of the concept

⁶³For a discussion of faith [*pistis*], hope, and charity see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 696-722.

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belongs at the conclusion of the Book of Mormon where it is repeated three times: Ether 12, Moroni 7, and Moroni 10. Nephi mentioned it, but if he had written a major essay about the overriding importance of charity, it would have disrupted not only the order of the ideas the Book of Mormon teaches, but by altering the sequence, would have called into question the overall message of the encoded sacred language of the Book of Mormon temple itself.

The Lord not only told the prophets what to and what not to write, but even as early as the original writings of Nephi, the Lord directed the development of the perfectly sequential outline to which the Book of Mormon authors—especially to Mormon who selected the sermons and quoted them in their appropriate order—so carefully adhered to the outline of the sacred story.

Even the authors of the Book of Mormon, did not assume responsibility for the veracity of their own work. Nephi, wrote, “And the Holy Ghost giveth authority that I should speak these things, and deny them not” (1 Nephi 10:22). And again,

I bid you an everlasting farewell, for these words shall condemn you at the last day. For what I seal on earth, shall be brought against you at the judgment bar; for thus hath the Lord commanded me, and I must obey. Amen” (2 Nephi 33:10-15).

Moroni testified the same thing by quoting conversations between himself and the Savior about what should go into the book and how it should be written (Ether 12:23-29). He concluded his work with,

27. And I exhort you to remember these things; for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord God will say unto you: Did I not declare my

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words unto you, which were written by this man
(Moroni 10:27-29).

Thus, the authors of the Book of Mormon testify that the Lord revealed to them the plan, outline, internal boundaries and other matters relating to the content of the Book of Mormon. In verification of that, the Lord himself testified that the words of the book are so sacred that a prophet/angel now holds the priesthood keys to the Book of Mormon, just as one might hold the sealing keys of the Nephite temple.

5. Behold, this is wisdom in me; wherefore, marvel not, for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth, and with Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the Book of Mormon, containing the fulness of my everlasting gospel, to whom I have committed the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim (D&C 27:5).

On judgement day, just as Moroni wrote, the eternal salvation of each individual will be in accordance to his knowing and adhering to those same principles that are taught in the Book of Mormon. Referring to the Prophet Joseph, the Lord said,

8. And gave him power from on high, by the means which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon;

9. Which contains a record of a fallen people, and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also;

10. Which was given by inspiration, and is confirmed to others by the ministering of angels, and is declared unto the world by them—

11. Proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true, and that God does inspire men and call them to

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his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old;

12. Thereby showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. Amen (D&C 20:8-12).

The second way the Book of Mormon fits that criterion, is that it's English translation is entirely a revelation from the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith who said he translated it "by the gift and power of God." Joseph told only his closest friends the precise mechanism by which he received that complex revelation, but the precision of his translation is demonstrable. We can move from Job to Nephi, back to Isaiah, to 3rd Nephi, to Paul, to Moroni, to John, and the code words of the Elizabethan translation of the Bible's sacred language are the same, and are used in the same way as the code words of the Book of Mormon's sacral language.

Moroni was very aware of the problems inherent in any translation. He was equally aware that his own words must be chosen and placed with great precision. He prayed to the Lord:

25 Thou hast also made our words powerful and great, even that we cannot write them; wherefore, when we write we behold our weakness, and stumble *because of the placing of our words*; and I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words (Ether 12:25).

The placement of the words is critical to their meaning. For example, when I was young they said to me, "You are good looking." Now I am old and walk with a cane they say, "You're lookin' good!" The translation of the latter is something like: "Aren't you dead yet?" The words are the same, but it is their placement that makes all the difference.

I am absolutely convinced that the placement of the English

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words in the Book of Mormon is as perfect as it is in the original. Yet, Moroni warned in his introduction to the Book of Mormon,

And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.

That, like much else in the Book of Mormon, has a second meaning. He says, “if there are faults they are the mistakes of men.” What men? The authors? No. The readers! “Wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.”

Joseph could never have learned the Bible’s sacred temple code from his contemporary back-country New England neighbors. But the interrelationships between the sacral languages of the Book of Mormon and Bible are nearly perfect. (Where it is not perfect, we can trace it to transmission or translation errors in the Bible)

The precision of the Book of Mormon language asks the question: How was it done? The answer has to do with the use of the Urim and Thummim, but perhaps not entirely that. There is good evidence that some of the original authors of the Book of Mormon were at least partly responsible for the word choices in the English translation of the Book of Mormon.⁶⁴

This criterion, that “the plan and measurements of the temple are revealed to the king or prophet, and the plan must be carefully carried out,” is met with exactitude by the prophets who brought us the Book of Mormon.

⁶⁴Joseph also received assistance from the original authors in the Book of Mormon. See LeGrand L. Baker, *Joseph and Moroni*, 89-95.

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9. “The temple is the central, organizing, unifying institution in the ancient Near Eastern society”

9b. “The destruction or loss of the temple is seen as calamitous and fatal to the community in which the temple has stood. The destruction is viewed as the result of social and moral decadence and disobedience to God's word”⁶⁵

In the present-day Kingdom of God there are three central organizing, unifying factors. The first is the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles who provide the institutional unity. The unity of covenant comes chiefly through the three dimensional temple administered under the authority and keys of the Prophet. The doctrinal unity comes from the scriptures, the Latter-day prophets, and the Holy Ghost. Because Moroni was wise enough to take the plates back after Joseph was through with them, the revealed translation is safe from being tampered with by wannabe experts who might think they could do a better job than Joseph did and try to provide us with an alternate translation.

Thus the document and its teachings have remained constant throughout the history of the church notwithstanding the temporary cultural influences that have played upon their interpretation. The Book of Mormon's importance as the unifying power of the kingdom cannot be overstated. That is attested by the sense of urgency with which the Book of Mormon is now being translated into new languages almost as soon as, sometimes before, missionaries are admitted into the countries that speak those languages; and also by the repeated instruction from the Brethren to the Saints to read and re-read the Book of Mormon. One of the

⁶⁵Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 58. See Meyers, “Jachin and Boaz, *Temple in Antiquity*, 143-145.

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reasons the Book of Mormon can provide this international doctrinal unity is because it is not bound to any cultural interpretation, as the Bible is bound to the history of the Holy Land. So it can speak with equal clarity to all the people of all cultures of the entire worldwide church.

The greatest unifying force in any culture is the family, and the Book of Mormon also stands as another testimony of the importance of the family. Women are rarely mentioned by name but their presence is always felt. Nephi calls attention to his mother's joy when he and his brothers returned to their camp after obtaining the brass plates. For she had done what mothers do—she had feared for her children's safety and reproached their father for sending them into harms way.

Nephi expresses his respect for his mother when he tells us that his father said to her, "I know that the Lord will deliver my sons out of the hands of Laban, and bring them down again unto us in the wilderness." She understood, and her fear was abated. Nephi describes his parents' unity of faith when he tells us:

And after this manner of language did my father, Lehi, comfort my mother, Sariah, concerning us, while we journeyed in the wilderness up to the land of Jerusalem, to obtain the record of the Jews" (1 Nephi 5:6).

Elsewhere in the scriptures, to comfort means to empower. It probably does here also. Consistent with his attitude toward his mother is Nephi's adulation of his wife.

And it came to pass that I, Nephi, took one of the daughters of Ishmael to wife...And also, I, Nephi, had been blessed of the Lord exceedingly (1 Nephi 16:7-8).

Later, when they are at sea, Nephi was bound and taunted

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by his older brothers. Remembering that, he wrote that he was not so much concerned for his own safety as he was for the discomfort of his family:

And Jacob and Joseph also, being young, having need of much nourishment, were grieved because of the afflictions of their mother; and also my wife with her tears and prayers, and also my children....
(1 Nephi 18:19)

The theme is taken up again in Jacob 2 where the whole burden of his sermon is family fidelity.

Because the Book of Mormon is essentially the history of a single family,⁶⁶ people who do not belong to the family (such as Samuel the Lamanite) only show up on the edges of the story. It is remarkable then, that in Mormon's abridgement, the women who are the heroines in the Book of Mormon are mostly Lamanites.

One is the queen who first distrusted the alien influence of Ammon, then embraced the gospel he taught.

And Ammon said unto her: Blessed art thou because of thy exceeding faith; I say unto thee, woman,

⁶⁶There are only three possible breaks in the continuity of the family tree from Nephi to Mormon. The first is when Alma leads the people, whose grandparents had attempted to reclaim the land of Nephi, back to Zarahemla, he is treated as a prince and given the kingdom as though he were king. But his blood relationship with Mosiah is not spelled out in the history. Similarly, while Mormon repeatedly identifies himself as a "pure descendant of Nephi" —that is, a member of the royal family—but he fails to give us his genealogy, so we do not know with certainty his relationship with the heads of the family that has preserved the plates and the sacred regalia is assumed rather than expressly explained. The third person who does not explicitly fit into the family is Captain Moroni. He is Heleman's intimate friend, but whether his was also his brother or was otherwise closely related, we are not told.

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there has not been such great faith among all the people of the Nephites (Alma 19:10).

The other is not a named individual, but represents an entire generation of Lamanite mothers. Helaman wrote to Moroni:

46. For as I had ever called them my sons (for they were all of them very young) even so they said unto me: Father, behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall; then let us go forth; we would not slay our brethren if they would let us alone; therefore let us go, lest they should overpower the army of Antipus.

47. Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.

48. And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it (Alma 56:46-48).

No part of the Book of Mormon emphasizes the importance of family as much as does the Savior's words and actions.

Chronologically, our earliest encounter with the Savior in the Book of Mormon is on a mountain where he talks with the brother of Jared. He introduced himself by saying:

13. And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you.

14. Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people.

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Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters (Ether 3:13-14).

The Savior implied the same thing when he was speaking to the multitude at the Nephite temple. There were gathered there “about two thousand and five hundred souls; and they did consist of men, women, and children” (3 Nephi 17:25). The “multitude” to whom he spoke the Beatitudes was made up of clusters of families. And when he spoke to them he spoke about families—eternal families.

There are several places in the Book of Mormon that evince those people had a full understanding of the importance of eternal families. Many of these are in Third Nephi.

And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words unto Nephi, and to those who had been called, (now the number of them who had been called, and received power and authority to baptize, was twelve) and behold, he stretched forth his hand unto the multitude, and cried unto them, saying.... (3 Nephi 12:1a).

That is important, he did not speak the Beatitudes to the Twelve exclusively, but he spoke to the multitude—to the men, women, and children—to the families.

Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you, and to be your servants; and unto them I have given power that they may baptize you with water; and after that ye are

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baptized with water, behold, I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost; therefore blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized, after that ye have seen me and know that I am (3 Nephi 12:1b).

Then, in the Beatitudes, he summarized the whole plan of salvation by quoting or paraphrasing key phrases in several chapters of the scriptures, most were from the Psalms and Isaiah. Some of the Beatitudes are about eternal families.

Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (3 Nephi 12:3).

He does not say, “they are citizens in the kingdom,” he says, “theirs is the kingdom”—it belongs to them. People who own kingdoms are called kings and queens, or if an ecclesiastical kingdom, priests and priestesses. If that interpretation is correct what the Beatitude says is “Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for they are the kings and queens, priests and priestesses in the kingdom of heaven.”⁶⁷

The Savior explains the first part of that Beatitude a few verses later when he says,

⁶⁷While many of the Beatitudes are clearly quotes or paraphrases from specific Old Testament sources, others cannot be identified as such—probably because our scriptures are not complete. Verse 3 is an example of that. The phrase “kingdom of heaven” does not appear in our Old Testament. Yet, we know it was familiar to the Nephites because it is often found in the Old Testament portion of the Book of Mormon. An example is:

And I say unto you again that he cannot save them in their sins; for I cannot deny his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore, how can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of heaven? Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your sins (Alma 11:37).

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19. And behold, I have given you the law and the commandments of my Father, that ye shall believe in me, and that ye shall repent of your sins, and come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Behold, ye have the commandments before you, and the law is fulfilled.

20. Therefore come unto me and be ye saved; for verily I say unto you, that except ye shall keep my commandments, which I have commanded you at this time, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (3 Nephi 12:19-20).

He had previously taught them,

20 And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost (3 Nephi 9:20a).

In the Beatitude the words, “Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (3 Nephi 12:3)⁶⁸ are talking about those who come to the Savior having sacrificed a broken heart and contrite spirit. Thus, the Beatitude might be read this way: “Yea, blessed are they who sacrifice a broken heart and a contrite spirit, *who come unto me*, for they are the kings and queens, and priests and priestesses in the kingdom of heaven.”

The Lord confirmed that understanding when he spoke to the Prophet Joseph:

⁶⁸For a discussion of 3 Nephi 12:3 see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 653-5

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But blessed are the poor who are pure in heart, whose hearts are broken, and whose spirits are contrite, for they shall see the kingdom of God coming in power and great glory unto their deliverance; for the fatness of the earth shall be theirs (D&C 56:18).

The next Beatitude also carries a strong connotation of the importance of eternal families.

And again, blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted (3 Nephi 12:4).⁶⁹

That is a direct paraphrase from Isaiah 61 which is about salvation for the dead. That chapter of Isaiah concludes with a marriage hymn.

10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels (Isaiah 61:10).

The fact that the Savior called their attention to the contents of that chapter presupposes that he knew the members of the congregation understood its meaning, including the significance of its culminating hymn. If that is correct, he was not only reminding them of the doctrine of salvation of the dead, but also the promise of being sealed to extended eternal families. The next Beatitude is a reiteration of that promise.

And blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the

⁶⁹For a discussion of 3 Nephi 12:4 see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 656-59.

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earth (3 Nephi 12:5).

Here the Savior cites two psalms. The most obvious is Psalm 37.

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall
delight themselves in the abundance of peace
(Psalm 37:11).

The other is Psalm 25 which defines the meek as those who keep their eternal covenants, and promises that they, with their children, shall inherit the earth.⁷⁰

⁷⁰The meaning of “secret” – *sode*.

The word “secret” is translated from the Hebrew *sode*. The denotation is a council of individuals. The connotation is the secret deliberations of a council. Many scholars write that the word *sode* refers to the Council in Heaven. *Sode* is pronounced with a long “O” like in the book of Job or the word “over.” Some scholar spell it in all caps: SOD. It is spelled “sode” in the dictionary at the back of James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (London: Hodder and Stoughton [first edition], 1894).. #5475. It is spelled “sod” by Raymond E. Brown who wrote:

We may begin with the Hebrew word “sod” a word which is never translated in the LXX by *mysterion*....the word has a wide semantic area: confidential talk, a circle of people in council, secrets....When we approach the early biblical uses of “sod” with the idea of “council” or ‘assembly’ in mind, we find that this meaning particularly fits the passages dealing with the heavenly “sod” in biblical references to the heavenly council of God and his angels....Amos (3:7) announces almost as a proverb that God will surely not do anything until he has revealed his ‘sod’ to his servants the prophets.’...In the Hebrew represented by Proverbs, Sirach, and Qumran, ‘sod’ is used simply for secrets or mysteries.” Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term “Mystery” in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 2-6. See also his earlier “The Pre-Christian Semitic Concept of ‘Mystery’,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 20 (1958): 417-443.

A *sode* experience is when a prophet returns to the Council to renew the covenants he made there and to re-receive authorization to speak the

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- 6 Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies
and thy lovingkindnesses; [*hesed*⁷¹]
for they have been ever of old.
- 7 Remember not the sins of my youth,
nor my transgressions:
according to thy mercy [*hesed*] remember thou me
for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.
- 8 Good and upright is the Lord:
therefore will he teach sinners in the way.
- 9 The meek will he guide in judgment:
and the meek will he teach his way.
- 10 All the paths of the Lord are mercy [*hesed*] and truth
unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.
- 11 For thy name's sake,
O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.
- 12 What man is he that feareth the Lord?
him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.
- 13 His soul shall dwell at ease;

words of God. Some of the best examples in the Old Testament are Isaiah 6, Psalm 45, and Psalm 82. Mullen correctly observed that, “Our major evidence for the council motif in the Old Testament is found primarily in Israel’s pre-exilic literature, especially in the Psalms and other poetic writings...” E. Theodore Mullen Jr., *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (Chico, California: Scholars, 1980). It is significant, as Edwin C. Kingsbury observes, that “These experiences are held in common by many of the pre-exilic prophets as well as by deutero-Isaiah, but are lacking in the experiences of the post-exilic prophets.” (“The Prophets and the Council of Yahweh,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 83 [1964]: 279). Some other scholars who have discussed the Council in Heaven are Miller, Patrick D., Jr., “Divine council and the Prophetic Call to War,” *Vetus Testamentum*,. 18, 1, January 1968: 100-107.

71For a discussion of Psalm 25 as a celebration of premortal covenant/ friendships [*hesed*] see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 360-73.

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and his seed [children of the meek]
shall inherit the earth.
14 The secret [*sode*] of the Lord is with them that
fear him; and he will shew them his covenant
(Psalm 25:6-14).

This promise was confirmed by the Lord to the Prophet Joseph:

15. And the spirit and the body are the soul of man.
16. And the resurrection from the dead is the
redemption of the soul.
17. And the redemption of the soul is through him
that quickeneth all things, in whose bosom it is
decreed that the poor and the meek [as defined in
the Beatitudes] of the earth shall inherit it.
18. Therefore, it [the earth] must needs be sanctified
from all unrighteousness, that it may be prepared
for the celestial glory (D&C 88:15-18).

If the Beatitudes are understood as a chiasmus, then the
high point is the verse that reads:

And blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall
be called the children of God (3 Nephi 12:9).

“Called” means that they are given a new name, and the
new name is “the children of God.” It is essentially the same as
was given to his people by King Benjamin. Many scholars believe
that Psalm 2 was sung at the conclusion of the ancient coronation
ceremony when the king was anointed. In the Psalm, he testifies of
the Lord’s covenant.

7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto
me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee

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(Psalm 2:7).⁷²

“Son” was the royal new name that signified that the anointed king was an adopted son of God.⁷³ Thus the king could sit on the throne of the temple as a legitimate heir of God. Were he not a son, he would be a usurper. Elsewhere in the scriptures, the name “son” is related to sacral kingship and priesthood. For example, members of the Council in Heaven are called by that name when the Lord reminded Job:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the
earth? ... When the morning stars.⁷⁴ sang together,
and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4-
7)

That sonship is renewed in this world.

⁷²For a discussion of Psalm 2 and *son* as the royal new name in ancient Israel see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 360-73.

In Hebrews, Paul cites a number of statements from throughout the Old Testament that show the covenant relationship of the Israel's king and God. Paul uses those scriptures to show that Jesus is King of Israel by virtue of his relationship with his Father. Psalm 2 is quoted in Hebrews 2:5. In that same verse he also quotes 2 Samuel 7:14, which is Jehovah's covenant with David.

⁷³Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967), 128-30. See Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 vols. Translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962).; A. H. Honneyman, “The Evidence for Regnal Names Among the Hebrews,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 67 (1948): 13-24, James K. Hoffmeier “From Pharaoh to Israel's Kings To Jesus,” in *Bible Review* (13, 2, June 1997): 48; Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man*, 152.

⁷⁴*Stars* and *heavens* are frequently used to represent the members of Council in Heaven. See Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 152.

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But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (John 1:12).⁷⁵

How it is done is explained by Mormon:

47. But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.

48. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen (Moroni 7:47-48. See also: 1 John 3:1-3).

It is apparent that Moroni 7 was given at a priesthood conference. We deduce that from the fact that he addresses “my beloved brethren” nine times in the speech. That is important, because it accounts for the gender specific, “that ye may become the sons of God.” That gender specificity was determined by Mormon’s audience. But when the Savior speaks of it in the Beatitudes, it is not gender specific: “for they shall be called the children of God.”

Another example is when Alma woke from his deep sleep he said,

24. For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and

⁷⁵See also Romans 8:14-19, Revelation 21:6-7; 3 Nephi 9:16-18; Moroni 7:25-27; D&C 1:28-30, 34:1, 35:1-2. 45:7-9, 76:50-59; Moses 7:1.

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have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit.

25. And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters;

26. And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God (Mosiah 27:24-26).

It is a purpose of the Book of Mormon temple to help create—not just a social unit—but a family unity where the word “family” means our immediate family and our extended family—when the extended family is huge, embracing dear friends as well as immediate family members—all of whom are called the children of God.

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9a. “The temple is associated with abundance and prosperity, indeed is perceived as the giver of these”⁷⁶

The ancient temple was associated with abundance and prosperity, because the temple priests dominated much of the local economy. That is not true of the Book of Mormon.⁷⁷ What is true is that the Book of Mormon is the source of prosperity—but only if we understand that word as the Book of Mormon uses it.

*Prosper*⁷⁸ is a code word in the Book of Mormon and is used to represent its most important purpose. Thus, when understood in that way, the Book of Mormon temple comes closer to performing the function of a legitimate temple than an economically based three dimensional temple could ever do.

Prosper as code was used by the Lord when he spoke to Nephi, who wrote,

19. And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me, saying: Blessed art thou, Nephi, because of thy faith, for thou hast sought me diligently, with lowliness of heart.

20. And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise; [Their prospering will precede their arriving in the land of promise, so it can't have reference to good crops after they have arrived. (It doesn't preclude that, of course, but it is simply about something else altogether) Nephi's prospering

⁷⁶Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 58.

⁷⁷However, if it were not for their testimonies of the Book of Mormon not many would pay tithing.

⁷⁸For a discussion of “prosper” see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 191-93.

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would occur while he was still in the desert where he was hungry much of the time.] yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands. [It will soon become apparent that “land” is another code word.]

22. And inasmuch as thy brethren shall rebel against thee, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord. And inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, thou shalt be made a ruler [king] and a teacher [priest] over thy brethren (1 Nephi 2:19-22).⁷⁹

The striking thing about this statement is that the opposite of the word “prosper” is not to have bad crops, or even to be hungry.⁸⁰

⁷⁹The earliest use of “prosper” as a code word that relates to having an abundance of spiritual blessings may be in the Psalm 45. The psalm is a scene of a play, and is spoken by many voiced. The first is a narrator or chorus speaking:

1. My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer [addressing the king, the narrator says:]

2. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips [some ordinance has just been performed]: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. [the words of the blessing then follow]

3. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. [glory and majesty are probably the names of clothing, one representing priesthood and the other kingship (as in Job 40:10)]

4. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

⁸⁰Code words would not be code words if they were always used as such. “Prosper” is a good example of that too. Alma strips away the veil from the code and uses it with perfect clarity when he tells the people of Ammonihah,

13 Behold, do ye not remember the words which he spake unto Lehi, saying that: Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper in the land? And again it is said that: Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from the presence of the

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Rather, it is to “be cut off from the presence of the Lord.” That relationship of ideas is reaffirmed by Lehi (2 Ne. 1:20, 4:4), and also by Alma who said,

13. Behold, do ye not remember the words which he spake unto Lehi, saying that: Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper in the land? And again it is said that: Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.

14. Now I would that ye should remember, that inasmuch as the Lamanites have not kept the commandments of God, they have been cut off from the presence of the Lord. Now we see that the word of the Lord has been verified in this thing, and the Lamanites have been cut off from his presence, from the beginning of their transgressions in the land (Alma 9:13-14).

Later, Alma explained,

But behold, my son, this is not all; for ye ought to know as I do know, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land; and ye ought to know also, that inasmuch as

Lord.

14 Now I would that ye should remember, that inasmuch as the Lamanites have not kept the commandments of God, they have been cut off from the presence of the Lord (Alma 9:13-14a).

But later, in that same speech, he uses “prospered” in its most ordinary sense:

22 Yea, and after having been delivered of God out of the land of Jerusalem... and they have been prospered until they are rich in all manner of things (Alma 9:22).

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ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall
be cut off from his presence. Now this is according
to his word (Alma 36:30).

So in the Book of Mormon, the code word “prosper” and the code phrase “prosper in the land” mean to come unto Christ—either the process of doing so, or to actually have already done so. Mormon's narrative and the prophets he quotes use that phrase both ways. He tells one story about what happened when the ideas of the law of consecration began to take hold in the church under king Mosiah. The people became rich in worldly things. After that, as their adherence to the law of consecration matured, “the Lord did visit them and did prosper them” (Mosiah 27:3-7; see also Alma 9:13, 38:1, 50:20).

As we would expect, this idea of prospering is frequently coupled with the admonition to keep God's commandments. Alma made that association when he said,

Blessed art thou and thy children; and they shall be
blessed, inasmuch as they shall keep my
commandments they shall prosper in the land. But
remember, inasmuch as they will not keep my
commandments they shall be cut off from the
presence of the Lord (Alma 50:20⁸¹).

Nephi associated the phrase “prosper in the land” with being able to read the scriptures and to know how to keep God's commandments. When he wrote about his struggle with the idea of killing Laban, he remembered,

14 And now, when I, Nephi, had heard these words,
I remembered the words of the Lord which he spake
unto me in the wilderness, saying that: Inasmuch as
thy seed shall keep my commandments, they shall

81See Jarom 1:9, Mosiah 2:22, Alma 48:25.

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prosper in the land of promise.

15 Yea, and I also thought that they could not keep the commandments of the Lord according to the law of Moses, save they should have the law.

16 And I also knew that the law was engraven upon the plates of brass (1 Nephi 4:14-16).

King Benjamin also related reading the scriptures and keeping the commandments to the idea of to “prosper in the land.”

And now, my sons, I would that ye should remember to search them [the plates of brass] diligently, that ye may profit thereby; and I would that ye should keep the commandments of God, that ye may prosper in the land according to the promises which the Lord made unto our fathers (Mosiah 1:7).

Mormon used the phrase, “prosper in the land,” to mean that captain Moroni and his followers received revelation. The revelation was about the way they should prepare for war.

And this was their faith, that by so doing God would prosper them in the land, or in other words, if they were faithful in keeping the commandments of God that he would prosper them in the land; yea, warn them to flee, or to prepare for war, according to their danger (Alma 48:15).

The word “prosper” is not always a code word, of course. Depending on its context, it is as apt to refer to economic or political success as it is to serve as a code word in the sacral language. In the following, King Benjamin seems to make an interesting parallel between both usages. First he used “prospered”

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to suggest (without limiting its meaning) that the Lord had kept them from falling to the hands the Lamanites. Then, almost immediately thereafter, he used the phrase “prosper in the land” to mean that no enemy, neither spiritual nor physical, would have the power to keep them out of the presence of God. He said,

31. And now, my brethren, I would that ye should do as ye have hitherto done. As ye have kept my commandments, and also the commandments of my father, and have prospered, and have been kept from falling into the hands of your enemies, even so if ye shall keep the commandments of my son, or the commandments of God which shall be delivered unto you by him, ye shall prosper in the land, and your enemies shall have no power over you.

32. But, O my people, beware lest there shall arise contentions among you, and ye list to obey the evil spirit, which was spoken of by my father Mosiah.

33. For behold, there is a wo pronounced upon him who listeth to obey that spirit; for if he listeth to obey him, and remaineth and dieth in his sins, the same drinketh damnation to his own soul; for he receiveth for his wages an everlasting punishment, having transgressed the law of God contrary to his own knowledge (Mosiah 2:31-33).

One of the most interesting uses of the phrase “prosper in the land” is in association with Nephite clothing that was “to cloth our nakedness.” That last phrase is also a code. It is like the one used in the Old Testament to describe the sacred garments worn by the High Priest.⁸² King Zeniff chose to use that phrase in his own autobiography. He wrote,

And I did cause that the women should spin, and

⁸²Exodus 28:41-42.

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toil, and work, and work all manner of fine linen, yea, and cloth of every kind, that we might clothe our nakedness; and thus we did prosper in the land—thus we did have continual peace in the land for the space of twenty and two years (Mosiah 10:5).

Perhaps the most significant use of the code phrase, “prosper in the land,” is when Mormon described the prophet Helaman to his readers. Mormon gave a quick spiritual biography of Helaman in which he employed almost all the accolades used in the Old Testament to describe a faithful, prophet-king. He wrote,

Nevertheless Helaman did fill the judgment-seat with justice and equity; yea, he did observe to keep the statutes, and the judgments, and the commandments of God; and he did do that which was right in the sight of God continually; and he did walk after the ways of his father, insomuch that he did prosper in the land (Helaman 3:20).

Even a casual reader must admit that after such a list of spiritual superlatives, it would be rather anticlimactic to suggest, as their conclusion, that the king also made a lot of money that year. It says that, of course, if one wishes to read it that way. But it also says something much more important and much more consistent with the spiritual crescendo to which the early part of the verse is building.

In summary, as the sacred encoded language uses the word “prosper,” the temple text of the Book of Mormon not only promises that we may “prosper in the land,” it also illuminates the way that leads us to the fulfillment of that promise.

10. “Inside the temple images of deities as well as living kings, temple priests and worshippers are washed, anointed, clothed, fed, enthroned and symbolically initiated into the presence of deity, and thus into eternal life. Further, New Year rites held in the temple include the reading and dramatic portrayals of texts which recite a pre-earthly war in heaven; a victory in that war by the forces of good, led by a chief deity; and the creation and establishment of the cosmos, cities, temples, and the social order. The sacred marriage is carried out at this time”⁸³

The actions described took place in ancient three

⁸³Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 58. See Donald W. Parry, “Ritual Anointing with Olive Oil in Ancient Israelite Religion,” *Allegory of the Olive Tree*, 266-71, 281-83; Ricks and Sroka, “King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 1994.243-44.

For discussions of sacred clothing see: Draper and Parry, “Seven Promises,” *Temple in Time and Eternity*, 134-136; Nibley, “Sacred Vestments,” in *Temple and Cosmos*, 91-138; Stephen D. Ricks, “The Garment of Adam in Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Tradition.” In *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 705-39; Ricks and Sroka, “Garment,” in “King, Coronation, and Temple,” 254-6; John A. Tvedtnes, “Priestly Clothing in Bible Times,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 649-704.

For discussions of covenants see Packer, Boyd K. *The Holy Temple* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft), 1980; Stephen D. Ricks, “Oaths and Oath Taking in the Old Testament,” *Temple in Time and Eternity*, 43-53; For discussions of the temple drama see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord*; Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*; Mowinkel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*; Nibley, “Abraham's Temple Drama,” *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, 1-42.

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dimensional sacred space as the presentation of the temple drama. The text of the Book of Mormon often expresses ideas in sequences similar to the coronation ceremonies and the Israelite temple rites and drama, and it throws a great deal of light on their meaning and purpose.⁸⁴ But reading the Book of Mormon is not the same as participating in the ancient temple rites and drama or the coronation ceremony. The reverse, however, is also true. Participating in the ancient temple rites was not the same as having an understanding that can come when we unlock the mysteries of the Book of Mormon's encoded text.

The symbolism of the coronation of the ancient Israelite king can be lost in the details of the ceremony if the rites are not understood as a single event. The king had been ordained a "priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110),⁸⁵ Then, during the coronation ceremonies he was washed, clothed in sacred garments, and anointed with a dual ordinance wherein he was adopted, crowned, and given the new name of "son" of God (Psalm 2).⁸⁶ He was then enthroned as king of Israel. Thus he was the legitimate "son" and legal heir to the throne. With his anointing he received "a special endowment of the Spirit [which] is clearly associated with the rite" of anointing.⁸⁷ Mowinckel further explained,

84For a discussion of the ancient Israelite temple drama and its importance in Nephite history see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord*. The entire book is devoted to that subject.

85For a discussion of Psalm 110 and the Melchizedek Priesthood in ancient Israel see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 239-53.

86For a discussion of Psalm 2 and the importance of the new king name see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 360-73.

87Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 15. The Bible records the anointings of six Israelite kings: Saul: 1 Samuel 10:1, David: 2 Samuel 5:3, Solomon: 1 Kings 1:39, Jehu: 2 Kings 9:6, Josh: 2 Kings 11:12, Jehoahaz: 2 Kings

His [the king's] divinity depends on the endowment he has received at his election and anointing and on the power flowing to him through the holy rites of the cult, by Yahweh's free will, and depending on the king's loyalty and obedience towards Yahweh's commandments.⁸⁸

The king's sitting on God's throne was a major symbolic act, an acknowledgment that he was God's legitimate son and heir.⁸⁹ Borsch explains,

In a similar context we should probably put texts relevant to the king's being *raised up* or *lifted up* on high, a notion which is to be compared rather than contrasted with that of the God or king ascending the holy mountain to be hailed as king. Mythically they represent much the same idea, and this is apparently why, as noted earlier, the king may be said to sit on God's throne, and why we find several other references which seem to indicate that the king could be thought to have a throne in heaven.⁹⁰

Now, in his full capacity as king, in the full regalia of royalty, the king delivered a sermon to the people.⁹¹

There are no examples of this coronation speech in the Bible. However, there are three examples in the Book of Mormon. One is Jacob's teachings at the temple in 2 Nephi. Another is in King Benjamin's story, where the king delivered a sermon on the importance of the Atonement. The third is in 3 Nephi, where the Savior came to the Nephite temple and taught the Beatitudes and a sermon like the Sermon on the Mount.

It is apparent from these examples that the lecture was more than just a reminder of the law, it is also a renewal of the covenants between Jehovah, the king, and the people of Israel. Geo Widengren wrote about that:

It is the king who plays the central role in this act of covenant making. Not only is it he who convokes the assembly, but it is he also who reads out to it the words of the book of the law, which is the basis of the covenant....Thus the king appears before us here fully exercising his duties as the real High

23:30. Absalom was also anointed to be king: 2 Samuel 19:11.

⁸⁸Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1, 58. He cites: Psalms 89:31-33; 18:21-25; 20:4; 132:10; 2 Samuel 7:14ff.

⁸⁹Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father (1 Chronicles 29:23).

⁹⁰Borsch, *Son of Man*, 120. Italics in original.

⁹¹Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 23; Widengren, *Ascension of the Apostle*, 24-26, 36-37.

Priest....The covenant is made in the temple....⁹²

After the king gave his lecture, the people participated in sacrifices and offerings. The next day, the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles temple drama, was a day of the great feast, representing the hoped-for New Jerusalem and the thousand year reign of peace—and beyond to “eternal prosperity.”

That entire coronation sequence is found in Third Nephi.⁹³ The Father announces Jesus’ coming by pronouncing the royal king-name—“this is my Beloved Son.” The Savior speaks out of the chaos of the storms and earthquakes to instruct the People to prepare appropriate sacrifices. He comes to his temple, where his earthly throne is located in the Holy of Holies. The people come as though in procession, to touch his hands and feet so they can testify that he is the resurrected Christ. He delivers a lecture on the sacredness of the laws of his gospel. The people bring some food and it becomes enough for everyone. The next day no one brings any food, but the Savior provides it. This is a day of both spiritual and physical feasting.

It is apparent that Mormon carefully wrote Third Nephi so we would recognize the Savior’s coming to the Nephites as the legitimate enactment of the ancient temple’s coronation ceremony—a declaration that Jesus *is* King.

⁹²Geo Widengren, “King and Covenant” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 2, 1 (Jan., 1957): 1-32.

⁹³For a full discussion of the Savior’s coronation in 3 Nephi see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 607-91.

11. "The temple is associated with the realm of the dead, the underworld, the afterlife, the grave. The unifying features here are the rites and worship of ancestors. Tombs can be, and in Egypt and elsewhere are, essentially temples (cf. the cosmic orientation, texts written on tomb walls which guide the deceased into the afterlife, etc). The unifying principle between temple and tomb is resurrection. Tombs and sarcophagi are "sacred places," sites of resurrection....The temple is the link between this world and the next"⁹⁴

The Savior's paraphrasing Isaiah 61 in the Beatitudes is sufficient evidence that the Nephite people understood the principles of salvation for the dead.⁹⁵ But the link the Book of Mormon provides between this world and the world of the dead is much stronger than that.

The Book of Mormon, by its own claims, is precisely designed to be a communication between the living of our day and the dead of the past.

There are two themes in the Book of Mormon that bring its dead into the world of our living. The first is that the prophets of the Book of Mormon asked the Lord to preserve their words for future generations. The second is the fulfillment of the Lord's promise that he would do so, and that they would speak to the people in the last days,⁹⁶ as Nephi prophesied:

16 For those who shall be destroyed shall speak unto them out of the ground, and their speech shall be low out of the dust, and their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit; for the Lord God will give unto him power, that he may whisper concerning them, even as it were out of the ground; and their speech shall whisper out of the dust (2 Nephi 26:16).

Similarly, among Moroni's last words is this warning that the Lord will take our part of that communication very seriously.

⁹⁴Lundquist, "Common Temple Ideology," 58. See King, *Come to the House of the Lord*, 140-153; Nibley, "Baptism for the Dead in Ancient Times," *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 100-167; Nibley, "Return to the Temple," *Temple and Cosmos*, 79; James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1912), 89; John A. Tvedtnes, "Baptism for the Dead in Early Christianity," *Temple in Time and Eternity*, 55-78.

⁹⁵Compare D&C 138:42, Isaiah 61:1-3, and 3 Nephi 12:4.

⁹⁶2 Nephi 3:19, Enos 1:16, Alma 37:12-19, Ether 12:22, D&C 3:19.

27 And I exhort you to remember these things; for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord God will say unto you: Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the dust? (Moroni 10:27)

In the Book of Mormon the association of ourselves, the living, with the dead who speak to us through the words of the book is not symbolic. Nephi, Mormon and Moroni were not writing to a contemporary living audience. They were writing to us. They understood that, and repeatedly reminded us it was so. In the Book of Mormon, the teacher-student relationship between the dead and the living is real because of the efficacy of Moroni's promise.

4. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

5. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things (Moroni 10-4-5).

The reality and the overriding importance of the message of the dead speaking to the living is the underpinning of the entire book. It is a voice from the dust, the fulfillment of the covenants between the Lord and his prophets that their words would be preserved for the Lamanites, the gentiles, and the Jews in the last days.

12. “Sacral, communal meals are carried out in connection with temple ritual, often at the conclusion of or during a covenant ceremony”⁹⁷

The symbolism of the sacral meal appears throughout the Book of Mormon, frequently with reference to the fruit of the tree of life and to the waters of life.

However, two major instances of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the Book of Mormon are especially important because without them, we would not understand what the sacral, covenant meal is all about. They are 3 Nephi chapter 18, chapters 19-20, and a third gives the words of the prayers in Moroni chapters 4 and 5.

In the 3 Nephi 18 account, the disciples brought the bread and wine to the Savior. It was at the end of the first day of the Savior's visit, when he had spent the entire day teaching, by words and example about the meanings of the Nephite temple. The bread and wine served was an appropriate, probably necessary, ritual conclusion to that day's instruction.

The chapter 19-20 account was at the conclusion of a similar experience. Only this time the food and drink of the Israelite temple feast were provided by the Savior himself, as in the eighth and final day of the Israelite temple drama.⁹⁸ In Third Nephi the people were literally partaking of the sacrificial temple feast in the presence of, and as guests of, the God who is himself the Last, Great, and Eternal Sacrifice.

Each of these two accounts of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Third Nephi is the concluding act of their profound temple experience with the Savior. In each the sacred meal is at or near the end of the day's experiences.

The third major instance in the Book of Mormon of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is in Moroni 4-5, where we find the words of the prayers themselves. The placement of these prayers, in the sequence of the entire Book of Mormon is the same as the placement of the sacred meals in the stories we have just considered. That is, in Moroni 4-5 the prayers are a concluding part of the long temple drama told by the sacral language of the entire Book of Mormon.

Even though all three of the above examples of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are very beautiful and precisely placed at the end of their respective temple experiences, they are not the ultimate temple feast of the Book of Mormon. There are two reasons why not. First the book invites us to partake of that same sacrament sanctified by those same prayers, so the transfer of the theoretical to the reality is complete.

Second, there is a temple feast of the Book of Mormon that

⁹⁷Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 59; see Draper and Parry, “Seven Promises,” *Temple in Time and Eternity*, 131-133.

⁹⁸For a discussion of the Israelite temple feast see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 431-41.

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is different from that, but no less real. Here are explanations of that feast given by the Prophets of the Book of Mormon:

Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do (2 Nephi 3:3).

O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever (Jacob 3:2).

Yea, and from that time even until now, I have labored without ceasing, that I might bring souls unto repentance; that I might bring them to taste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste; that they might also be born of God, and be filled with the Holy Ghost (Alma 36:24).

And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure; and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst (Alma 32:42).

As such a feast, the Book of Mormon is without equal, whether read as a missionary tract by one who has encountered it for the first time, or read as a temple text by one who knows its encoded language. For one who will feast upon its words, the Book of Mormon is as pure, and full of light as the gleaming fruit of the tree of life.

13. “The tablets of destiny are consulted both in the cosmic sense by the gods, and yearly in a special temple chamber.... It was by this means that the will of deity was communicated to the people through the king or prophet for a given year”⁹⁹

For the pagan priests and kings who oversaw the temples of their ancient Near Eastern gods, the tablets of destiny, or tablets of fate, were the magic devices by which they controlled the masses. The power in these illusive tablets lay in the belief that they held the key to the future of individuals, as well as of the king, and even of the state. The eminent scholar E. A. Wallis Budge explained,

Nowhere in the texts is any description of this Tablet given, but we probably find a parallel to it in the Book of the Dead and in the Kur'n. In the former there is a mention of a “brick,” on which the decrees of Ptah-Tanen concerning the destiny of Osiris were inscribed (Chap. clxxii.1.15), and in the later we have the “Preserved Tablet” (Surah x.62), on which the destiny of every man was written at or before the creation of the world.¹⁰⁰

Even though the tablets are not described, we can know something of their power by the part they played in the war in heaven as told in the legends of the Mesopotamian gods. In these stories, whichever of the gods owned the tablets could control the affairs of both heaven and earth.

The story is that Marduk became the chief god of the people of Mesopotamia and ruled over them by virtue of his possession of the tablets. He could use the information they contained about men’s foreordinations to interfere in the lives of men and frustrate the purposes of the other gods. The priests of Babylon who sacrificed to Marduk hoped to get access to the information on the tablets by examining the markings on a sheep’s liver or by using other devices to discover omens that predicted their future—and the future of the king and the people. The Babylonian god was believed to have had power to control each man and woman upon the earth because he had information about the foreordained destiny of each, and of the assignments they were given from the foundation of the world. (There is an interesting correlation between that belief and the belief of many Latter-day Saints that Satan has not forgotten who we are, and seeks to frustrate our purposes.)

⁹⁹Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 59. See Hauglid, “Sacred Time and the Temple,” 636-645 Hauglid, Brian M. “Sacred Time and the Temple.” In *Temples of the Ancient World*, edited by Donald W. Parry. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994.

¹⁰⁰E. A. Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1925), 80-83, 102, 104, 138.

The Nephite temple that is the Book of Mormon is not a place for checking sheep's liver to find the secrets of things to come. However it is a legitimate key to knowing the covenants we made in our pre-mortal past and to know how they might be fulfilled now and in the future.

Individually, that is precisely true because the Book of Mormon is the map of the *way* along which every individual must walk to return to God. As such its principles may serve as a prophecy of the spiritual growth in the lives of every righteous person.

Collectively, it is different but also true, because as a key to the future the Book of Mormon contains many prophecies about the future of the Kingdom of God. These covenants were made with us and many others before the foundation of the world. They talk about the restoration of the gospel and the gathering of Israel—and beyond until the millennial reign of the Savior.

The Book of Mormon is replete with the assurances that our Father knows us individually. He knows our assignments and the parts each of us will play in achieving his ultimate ends. He will fulfill all the covenants he made with each of us so that we can keep the covenants we made with him.

14. “God's word is revealed in the temple, usually in the holy of holies, to priests or prophets attached to the temple or to the religious system that it represents”¹⁰¹

In one of the accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision, Joseph is quoted as saying, “Information was what I most desired at this time, and with a fixed determination to obtain it, I called on the Lord for the first time in the place above stated.”¹⁰² Not unlike Joseph, information from God is what we all desire.

The Book of Mormon does not lay exclusive claim to being the source of God's will, of inspiration, or of personal revelation. In the Bible the apostle John's frequent challenge, “he who has ears let him hear,” is addressed to the same kind of audience as Moroni's “And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things”; who are the same as those to whom the Prophet Joseph Smith quoted the Lord as saying,

I'll surely reveal all my syst'ries to them,
The great hidden myst'ries in my kingdom stor'd
From the council in Kolob, to time on the earth,
And for ages to come unto them I will show
My pleasure & will, what my kingdom will do:
Eternity's wonders they truly shall know.¹⁰³

If we will pray when we read the Book of Mormon, the Spirit of God will testify that the Book of Mormon as a whole is truly divine in its origin and message. As we continue to study the book prayerfully, that same Spirit will teach the reader that specific ideas in the book are true. The Spirit communicates its testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon by the same feeling with which it communicates its testimony of the truthfulness of individual doctrines. For one who reads the Book of Mormon regularly, this interaction with the Holy Ghost happens so frequently that before long the reader is able to recognize the feeling of testimony and distinguish from all other emotions with as much surety as we can recognize the taste of an orange and distinguish it from the taste of an apple. Then, when we encounter that same feeling outside the context of the Book of Mormon, while listening to General Conference or when seeking an answer to our own prayers, we recognize the feeling and can know it is of God.

When we have an idea and the words of the thoughts or the impressions of the mind are accompanied by that same feeling, we will recognize it to be that same spirit of revelation that taught him

101Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 59.

102Dean C. Jessee “The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision,” *BYU Studies* 9, 3 (Spring 1969): 275-94.

103Joseph Smith, “A Vision,” *Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1843: this is D&C 76 in poetry by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

that the Book of Mormon is true. The spirit of revelation carries the same feeling in every context, but it takes a little practice to recognize it with surety. The easiest way to get that practice is to read the Book of Mormon and ask God to teach us about the truthfulness of what we are reading. Consequently, one of the greatest blessings of the Book of Mormon is that as we read it faithfully and prayerfully, and listens to the feelings that are associated with the Holy Ghost, the ease with which we come to recognize the testimony of that Spirit, or perhaps our sensitivity to its prompting, will increase until that feeling—the testimony we originally received that the Book of Mormon is the word of God—will become the standard by which we may measure the truthfulness of all things.

In this criteria of the ancient temple typology, the Book of Mormon is sacred space in sacred time, a place of peace—a Holy of Holies. It is not only a source of revelation to whomever is wise enough to claim the blessings connected with its prayerful reading, it is also the means of instruction by which we can learn to listen to the Spirit of God and recognize the validity of ones own personal revelation, through the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

15. “There is a close interrelationship between the temple and law in the ancient Near East. The building or restoration of a temple is perceived as the moving force behind a restating or “codifying” of basic legal principles, and of the “righting” and organizing of proper social order. The building or refurbishing of temples is central to the covenant process”¹⁰⁴

The Book of Mormon is the harbinger of *thee* new law. After teaching the value and purposes of the Law of Moses it shows how and why that Law was fulfilled.

It teaches the *fulness* of the gospel as taught by the Savior to the Nephites.

The Lord calls the Book of Mormon his “new covenant.” (D&C 84:57) The gospel taught in its pages is everlasting because it was proclaimed before the foundation of the world and will be the criteria by which all the earth will be judged. It is new because it is taught anew in our time.

The translation and publication of the Book of Mormon challenged the teachings of apostate Christianity and began a new era when all of the laws of the gospel will ultimately be preached to every nation tongue and people. In this regard, as in others we have already observed, the Book of Mormon fulfills this criterion of Lundquist's typology literally with regard to the establishment, proclaiming, and upholding of the kingdom of God.

¹⁰⁴Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 59.

16. “The temple is a place of sacrifice”¹⁰⁵

In our everyday language, sacrifice means something different from what it means in the scriptures. The way we usually use it, sacrifice means to give up something that is of worth. We equate that word with the Old Testament’s burnt offerings when an entire animal was consumed on the altar. But a burnt offering and a sacrifice were not the same thing. Often in a sacrifice, only some of the blood and fat of the animal were sprinkled on the fire, the meat of the animal was eaten during a sacred meal that had much of the same symbolism as our sacrament.

Sacrifice and sacrament come from the same root, so do sacred, and sacral. It has the same connotation as sanctify. Sacrifice means to make something sacred—to set it apart and use it for a sacred purpose—but it did not mean to lose something or give it up. Thus, in the sacrifices of the Law of Moses, the animal was not given up to be consumed by the fire, but it was set aside, made sacred, dedicated to the uses and purposes of the Lord, and often eaten by the person who dedicated it to sacred purposes. Eating it with a priest at the table symbolized that God had accepted the sacrifice. In somewhat that same way, tithing is a modern-day sacrifice. It is not something we lose, but rather something that we set aside, and dedicate to sacred purposes. Throughout the scriptures—even during the time when animal sacrifices were still performed under the Law of Moses—the sacrifice the people understood to be most acceptable to the Lord was not an animal, but one’s Self—a sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. The psalms they sang during their temple services acknowledged the principle.

34 The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Psalm 34:18).

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise (Psalm 51:16-17).¹⁰⁶

Because much of the Old Testament was either written or edited after the Babylonian captivity, during a time of apostasy, the Old Testament does not give us a full understanding of the Law of Moses.¹⁰⁷ However, one of the great blessings of the Book of Mormon is that it contains the pure religion that was practiced in conjunction with the Temple of Solomon under the Law of Moses.

¹⁰⁵Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 59.

¹⁰⁶See D&C 56:17-20, 3 Nephi 9:19-20, D&C 59:8.

¹⁰⁷For a discussion of the Jewish apostasy see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 47-65.

Like so many other things, the Book of Mormon gives us a context into which to put this idea of sacrificing one's Self. Lehi taught:

7 Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered (2 Nephi 2:7).

Nephi expanded that meaning when he incorporated the concept into his psalm:

31 O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul? Wilt thou deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies? Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin?

32 May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite! O Lord, wilt thou not shut the gates of thy righteousness before me, that I may walk in the path of the low valley, that I may be strict in the plain road! (2 Nephi 4:31-32)

Six hundred years latter, when the Lord spoke out of the darkness to the Nephites, he said,

18 I am the light and the life of the world. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

19 And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings.

20 And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost (3 Nephi 9:18-20).

As in much of the Savior's ministry, he used their understanding of the psalms as a foundation for his teachings. This practice also gives us the advantage of understanding what is meant by many of the Savior's teachings in the Book of Mormon. In the ancient world, the heart was the seat of our intellect as well as of our emotions.¹⁰⁸ Nibley and Rhodes explain:

That for the Egyptians the heart was "the seat of all human existence." "It represents," wrote Adriaan de Buck, "the totality of life and the manifestations of life, the essence and personality of every man." It is the most intimate part of the individual "the center

¹⁰⁸Strong, # 3820.

of life, ...the seat of feeling and intellect, of decision-making and conscience.”¹⁰⁹

That is important. In our current-day usage, the brain is the seat of our intellect and the heart is the center of our emotions. But that was not true in the ancient scriptures. In the Old Testament the heart did the things our brains do. If one got a great idea, his head did not feel any differently, rather, the enthusiasm for the idea was felt in our chest. Therefore, the intellect was thought to be there, in the heart. In Old Testament usage, they thought in the heart (Genesis 6:5-6) and made decisions in their hearts (Genesis 8:21).

Both memory (Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:5-6) and imagination (Genesis 8:21) happened in the heart. Integrity was a function of the heart (Genesis 20:6; Exodus 25:2, 35:5), as was wisdom. (Exodus 36:2) They prayed in their hearts. (Genesis 24:45)

The heart was also the seat of the emotions—all emotions except pity and empathy. If you saw a puppy dog hit by a car, you would feel it right in the pit of your stomach, and so it was with them. Thus the phrase, “bowels of mercy” acknowledges that the emotions of pity and empathy are found there in the center of our being.

The emotions of the heart ranged from laughter (Genesis 17:17) and gladness (Exodus 4:14), to sorrow (Leviticus 26:16) and discouragement (Numbers 32:7-9); fear (Genesis 42:28, 45:26), to hatred and the desire for revenge (Genesis 27:41, Exodus 4:21, Leviticus 19:17).

The most important function of the heart was this:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might
(Deuteronomy 6:5).

The interesting thing about that scripture is that Moses made a distinction between the heart, which is the seat of our physical intellect and emotions, and our soul, which in ancient Israelite religion had an intellect and experienced emotions of its own.¹¹⁰ When the Lord said we must sacrifice a broken heart and a contrite spirit, he was making that same distinction—the heart, the physical seat of our emotions and intellect, and the spirit, the seat on our spiritual intellect and emotion.

If almost all of our academic and emotional attitudes reside in our physical heart, then we must ask, “What is a broken heart—what does ‘broken’ mean?”

“Broken” means broken. If a plastic pot falls from a shelf and hits the ground, it has enough cohesive strength to retain its

109Hugh Nibley and Michael D. Rhodes, *One Eternal Round* (Deseret Book and FARMS, 2010). Their second quote is from Erika Feucht.

110For Abinadi’s discussion of the dualism in each individual see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 500-01

shape, and it remains a pot. However if a clay pot falls from the shelf, it shatters—is broken—is no longer a pot—but has become only disassembled bits of clay potsherds. That happened because the clay pot did not hold its parts together: breaking was a function of the pot, not of the ground it collided with. How does that apply to the sacrifice of a broken heart? Very simply: If our attitudes (either intellectual or emotional) are as well established as the plastic pot there is no place for change. Then prejudice, bigotry, and academic pride get in the way of repentance and testimony—and so preclude us from becoming a part of the kingdom of God. If our heart is broken, then there are no ideas or prejudices in this world that are so important that we cannot let them go if the Holy Ghost teaches they are wrong. A broken heart is a necessary prerequisite to repentance, to intellectual growth, and to personal perfection.

“Spirit” means spirit. It is that part of our Self that gives animation and life to our body and eternal continuity to our cognizance and personality.

“Contrite,” as we usually use it, means to be downcast or subdued, but that is only part of its meaning. In both Hebrew and English, the word means to be pulverized, turned to dust. Contrite is what happens to the clay pot if it is beaten with a hammer, or to wood if it is attacked by sandpaper, or to our foot when a poorly fitting shoe rubs on it until it becomes blistered and develops a raw sore.

Broken is a function of the pot itself, but contrite is the kind of breaking that requires something else to beat it to dust. Contrite is what happens to the soul of a parent who is hurt by the words of a rebellious child, but who absorbs the pain and loves the child as though the pain were never delivered. It is being kind when no kindness is given in return. It is standing between the gossip and the person gossiped about. It is being:

...willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light...to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life— (Mosiah 18:8b-9).

It is taking onto one's Self someone else's pain—sometimes even the consequences of someone else's sin.

In terms of the Savior's Atonement, a broken heart was what happened to him on the cross when everything he held dear in this world was taken away, even though legions of angels might have prevented his losing anything he wanted to keep. A contrite spirit was what happen to him in the Garden when his taking upon himself our pains and our sins nearly crushed his mighty soul.

We are required to sacrifice a broken heart and contrite

spirit, that is, we are required to do—within the limits of our mortal ability—the same thing the Savior did: let no treasured thing, or favorite bit of academia, or prejudicial attitude stand between our Self and our covenant responsibilities and relationships (*hesed*); and whenever possible and appropriate absorb the pains and sorrows—even the sins—of others through the power and integrity of our own love. But there is one further implication rooted in the notion of this sacrifice.

The sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit (as were the blood sacrifices of the Law) is associated with ancient priesthood covenants and ordinances. That temple relationship is emphasized by the phrase “in righteousness” [*zedek*¹¹¹] in the following verse.

Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit (D&C 59:8).

In America, after the Savior had spoken the Beatitudes, he placed that sacrifice in its appropriate temple setting:

19. And behold, I have given you the law and the commandments of my Father, that ye shall believe in me, and that ye shall repent of your sins, and come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Behold, ye have the commandments before you, and the law is fulfilled.

20. Therefore come unto me and be ye saved; for verily I say unto you, that except ye shall keep my commandments, which I have commanded you at this time, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (3 Nephi 12: 19-20)

Just as animal sacrifices had to be made with proper priesthood authority and in the correct places, so this sacrifice of a broken heart and contrite spirit also must be made in conjunction with priesthood ordinances performed in righteousness—enabling us to come to where He is.

15 Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness

¹¹¹Righteousness is translated from the Hebrew word *zedek*, as in Melchizedek which means king of righteousness. *Zedek* means correct, precise, square. The same word, only spelled Zadok was the name of the high priest who anointed Solomon to be king, and presided over the Temple at Jerusalem. After that, until the high priesthood became a political appointment, descendants of Zadok were the only legitimate high priests. So the word *zedek* not only means correct, but also has a highpriestly connotation that might mean “temple correct.”

of mind, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you—yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel.(Ether 4: 15)

The ultimate acceptable sacrifice to the Lord is our broken heart and a contrite spirit. Even though no three dimensional sacrificial altar can be found between the covers of the Book of Mormon, the book remains the best place where can be taught the meaning of a broken heart and contrite spirit. No one who has read the Book of Mormon with prayer and real intent will question the book's power to transport his soul to the sacred space where he can make that sacrifice.

17. “The temple and its ritual are enshrouded in secrecy. This secrecy relates to the sacredness of the temple precinct and the strict division in ancient times between sacred and profane space”¹¹²

A key to that secrecy is the word *mysterion*¹¹³

We have already discussed the Book of Mormon's linguistic sacred and profane spaces, and that, even though the message of the sacred language is “enshrouded in secrecy,” the prophets of the Book of Mormon frequently teach us about the importance of knowing the mysteries of Godliness. In the Book of Mormon that word is emphasized in its first verse where Nephi includes his “great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God” among his qualifications for writing. (1 Nephi 1: 1)

After that, not only Nephi, but many other prophets of the

112Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 59. See Nibley, “On the Sacred and the Symbolic.” *In Temples of the Ancient World*; Nibley, “Return to the Temple,” *Temple and Cosmos*, 61-66; Packer, “Chapter 2, These Things Are Sacred,” *The Holy Temple* 25-37.

113The distinguished Biblical scholar, Raymond E. Brown, has shown that the meaning of the Greek word *mysterion* (translated “mystery” in the English versions of the New Testament) and of the Hebrew word *sode* (translated “secret” in the English versions of the Old Testament) is essentially the same. *Mysterion* is more specific since it refers to secrets disclosed during initiation into sacred religious rites, [Strong 3466: “the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites”] while *sode* is more general in that it refers to the deliberations (or decisions) of either a religious or a secular council. Brown observes that the New Testament *mysterion* refers to the Council in Heaven. He shows that in the Old Testament *sode* sometimes refers to that Council or its decisions (as in Amos 3:7), though it is sometimes used to describe any gathering, whether legal, or illegal and conspiratorial. (see Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term “Mystery” in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 2-6).

Understanding these words casts a fascinating light on the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. The Nephites most likely spoke Hebrew or some other Semitic language, not Greek, so the Greek word *mysterion* was probably not a part of their language, whereas the Hebrew word *sode* (with its English equivalents) was likely familiar to the ancient Book of Mormon peoples. In the Book of Mormon, as in the Bible, *sode* might refer to a Council in Heaven *sode* experience, or a ceremony related to the temple drama representing a *sode* experience, or even the secret decisions of conspirators. In this, the English translation of the Book of Mormon is very precise. When the underlying word *sode* used in the negative sense it is translated as “secret,” as in “secret combinations.” However, when the underlying word *sode* is used in the positive sense—indicating a temple or temple-like experience—it is always translated as “mystery,” equivalent to the English New Testament translation of the Greek *mysterion*. Thus, Nephi writes of “having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God” (1 Nephi 1:1).

Book of Mormon emphasized the importance of knowing the mysteries and issued repeated invitations to their readers to seek to understand.¹¹⁴

There is a veil that separates the things of this world from the things of God. One of the most important functions of the Holy Ghost is to help us penetrate that veil of misunderstanding and be comfortable on its other side—in a spiritual, emotional, and intellectual place that is different from the profane places where people of this world meet to exchange their wisdom and their prejudices.

Nephi described that veil to his brothers when he explained the meaning of his father's vision of the tree of life. He taught them about the iron rod, the river, and the struggles we make to overcome the world. He told them that there "was an awful gulf" that separated the wicked from the tree of life, and also from the saints of God. He also mentioned a veil of light (the shechinah¹¹⁵) through which the wicked could not pass. He said:

And I said unto them that our father also saw that the justice of God did also divide the wicked from the righteous; and the brightness thereof was like unto the brightness of a flaming fire, which ascendeth up unto God forever and ever, and hath no end. (1 Nephi 15: 27-30)

Beyond that veil of light are the things kept hidden from the foundation of the world. They have always been hidden; they are hidden now, and always shall be hidden. In the Book of Mormon they are hidden by a linguistic veil that can only be found and penetrated by those who come to the tree with a broken heart and contrite spirit, and who:

1141 Nephi 10: 17-22; Alma 12: 9-11; Alma 40: 3; Mosiah 1: 3-5. See also Alma 37: 4; Alma 26: 22; Mosiah 2: 9; 1 Nephi 2: 16; Jacob 4: 18; Mosiah 2: 9.; 3 Nephi 1-12.

115The Shechinah is the first thing one sees, and sometimes the only thing the prophets mention, when they are brought into the presence of God. It is described many ways, but always as a bright light—sometimes a fire, sometimes a cloud. Examples are Lehi's report that "there came a pillar of fire and dwelt upon a rock before him" (1 Nephi 1:6); Moses's experience when "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." (Exodus 3:2); The story in Ether where, "the Lord came down and talked with the brother of Jared; and he was in a cloud, and the brother of Jared saw him not" (Ether 2:4); and the Prophet Joseph's "I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me" (Joseph Smith-History:16).

Joseph's making a point of describing the Shechinah in connection with his account of the First Vision is another evidence that he was telling the truth. For additional information about the Shechinah see that word in the dictionary at the back of the LDS Bible.

*The Book of Mormon as an
Ancient Israelite Temple*

7 Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

8 For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. (3 Nephi 14: 7-8)

These are the things that must be known but cannot be taught except by the Holy Ghost.

18. “The temple and its cult are central to the economic structure of ancient Near Eastern society”¹¹⁶

The word “cult”¹¹⁷ means simply the ceremonies and ordinances performed in conjunction with sacred space. Some fundamentalist Christians like to say that the Mormons are a cult, but when we use the word correctly, so are the Catholics, and the Baptists, and any other group that performs rites as a part of religious their beliefs. The entire ceremonial function of the Temple of Solomon is appropriately be called “cultic” by Bible scholars.

The primary object of the Book of Mormon is to help prepare people to come to Christ—an invitation whose ultimate realization is reserved for the pure in heart—for people who are, individually and collectively, Zion (3 Nephi 12: 8, D&C 97: 21). In the Book of Mormon, one of the last and most important stations along the way toward eternal life is charity.¹¹⁸ In the Doctrine and Covenants the goal to which we reach is the law of consecration. Charity is what one *is*, the law of consecration is what one *does*. They are simply two sides of the same coin. The Book of Mormon leads its readers to charity and thus to the personal fulfillment of the law of consecration. It invites each one to be a part of the eternal, celestial society where the law of consecration is the bases of the central economic structure of a Zion society.

Here again, in its objective, function, and fulfillment, the Book of Mormon comes closer to the legitimate economic function of a temple than did the three dimensional temples of the ancient Near East. There, the temple's symbolism was often the authority by which the priests collected offerings and directed the economic affairs of the temple property and sometimes even of the state. The Book of Mormon offers no such symbolism. In reality it leads every individual who will, to personally participate in the most sacred and exalting economic order of heaven.

¹¹⁶Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 59.

¹¹⁷For a discussion of the meaning of “cult” see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 118-20.

¹¹⁸For a discussion of the meaning of faith, hope and charity see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 696-722.

19. “The temple plays a legitimizing political role in the ancient Near East”¹¹⁹

The three dimensional temple plays such a role because of the coronation ordinances performed therein and the authority those ordinances symbolize. Coronation ceremonies in the ancient Near East were temple rites so without the symbolism of a physical temple, the legitimacy of the king, and even of his state, were called into question. This is also true of the Book of Mormon. The book itself, rather than its symbolism, plays a legitimizing role to the Kingdom of God.

To a great degree the very existence of the Book of Mormon legitimizes the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his establishment of the Kingdom of God. This is true because the translation of the Book of Mormon marked the beginning of the establishment of the Kingdom of God; because the Prophet's claim to his divine commission rests squarely on the authenticity of the Book of Mormon as ancient scripture; and because the book's power to convert has been, and continues to be, the lifespring of the growth of the kingdom. For many believers who have never had the opportunity to enjoy a one-on-one contact with a living prophet, the Book of Mormon itself is the primary tangible evidence of the legitimacy—even of the existence—of the Kingdom of God—and to a marked degree, the belief in the Book of Mormon's divinity actually defines those who belong to that kingdom and sets them apart from the rest of the world.

¹¹⁹Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 59; Lundquist, “Legitimizing Role of the Temple,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 179-235.

Conclusion

The Book of Mormon has almost every characteristic that may define an ancient temple except those that require access to three dimensional sacred space. Another way of saying that is that neither the use of, nor the fulfillment of the promises of the Book of Mormon temple are limited to a given time or a given place. The Book of Mormon is a portable, universal temple. It is as world-wide as the world-wide Church. It not only invites all who will come to “come unto Christ,” but it also shows them the *way*.

It is true that without the three dimensional temples and the authority associated therewith, the Book of Mormon temple would be only an empty beckoning. But it is also true that if we were devoid of the rich symbolism and unfathomable depths of the Book of Mormon temple, and did not know the *way* defined therein, then the three dimensional temples would seem to be very flat, unprofitable, and unsubstantial. As it is, however, the more one has plumbed the depths of the temple that is in the sacred space and language of the Book of Mormon, the more he is in awe of the three dimensional temple and of the rites and drama that are performed there.

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